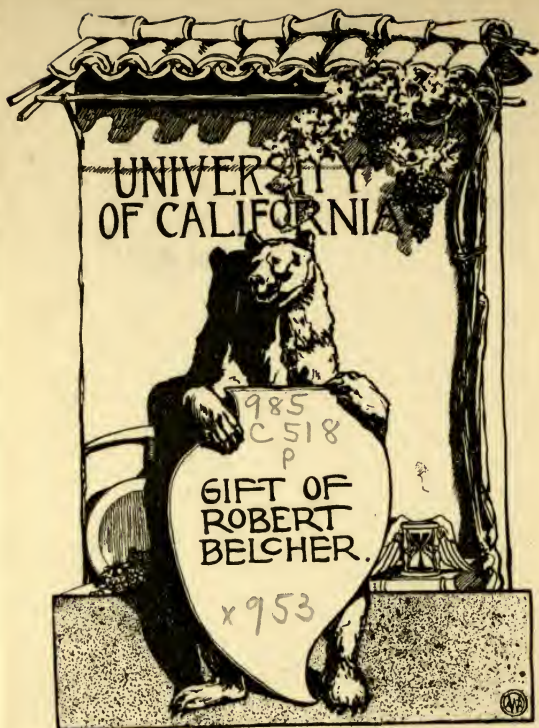


POEMS

BY JOHN
VANCE
CHENEY



UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA

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GIFT OF
ROBERT
BELCHER.

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POEMS

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BY

JOHN VANCE CHENEY



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BELCHER

TO
SARA LOUISE CHENEY

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CREDO

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THE HEART OF MAN
CREDO



MY FAITH

I TRUST in what the love-mad mavis sings,
In what the whiteweed says whereso it
blows,
And the red sorrel and the redder rose ;
I trust the power that puts the bee on wings,
And in the socket sets the rock, and rings
The hill with mist, and gilds the brook,
and sows
The dusk ; is on the wind which comes
and goes,
The voice in thunders and leaf-murmurings ;
I trust the might that makes the lichen strong,
That leads the rabbit from her burrow
forth,
That in the shadow hides, in sunlight
shines ;
I trust what gives the one lone cricket song,
What points the clamorous wild-geese
harrow north,
And sifts the white calm on the winter
pines.

THE ISLES OF QUIET

THE Isles of Quiet lie beyond the years.
Hoar prophets say it ; yet, for all the tears,
I doubt the saying of the seers.

I think that whoso seeks them here shall
find ;

That all with open, patient heart and mind
Shall drink of peace from sun and wind ;

Shall make their own the hymn of rest begun
When shadows say the summer day is done,
And sky and field are growing one.

Idler the fancy, closer it may cling ;
Yet I believe the wide air's murmuring,
The sweet far song the thrushes sing.

BY AND BY

At last, somewhere, some happy day,
The bliss will round us lie ;
For all a joyous way
To follow by and by.

'T is taught by every star that wheels,
By every flower that blows,
By all a young heart feels,
By all an old heart knows.

THANKS

THANKS to you, sun and moon and star,
And you, blue level with no cloud, —
Thanks to you, splendors from afar,
For a high heart, a neck unbowed.

Thanks to you, wind, sent to and fro,
To you, light, pouring from the dawn ;
Thanks for the breath and glory-flow
The steadfast soul can feed upon.

Thanks to you, pain and want and care,
And you, joys, cunning to deceive,
And you, balked phantoms of despair ;
I battle on, and I believe.

Thanks to you, ministers benign,
In whatsoever guise you come ;
Under this fig-tree and this vine,
Here I am master, and at home.

PLACE ENOUGH FOR ME AND PEACE

UPON the thousands cast

Into the field of days, with troubled flow
My thought went out ; I saw them ranked
and massed

In battle, and laid low.

To live, to think and feel,

It was to fat the robber of the nest ;
I looked, I saw the serpent at the heel,
The aspic at the breast.

I saw want's tightening twist,

His crushing coil, around the child of care ;
I saw the day-god wallow through the mist
To gild a harlot's hair.

I saw high worth bowed down,

Vanity glad as laughing summer-green ;
I saw the unkingliest thing clap on a crown,
Hoar honor wasting mean.

PLACE ENOUGH FOR ME

But on itself thought turns.

“Thou fool!” mine said. “The lovely
violet blows,
There’s fire yet in the star, the foxglove
burns,
Runs love-blood in the rose.

“Curled in the shadow-vase,
Ferns cluster; morn shakes bright the
willow leaves;
The haughty worlds are at the appointed
place,
The swallows at the eaves.

“The grasshopper has song,
The noon heat at the cricket’s heart, it
stings;
The bluebird still brings heaven with him
along,
Of it he shines and sings.

“Out of the sun and cloud
The silences, the wonders of the wind;

PLACE ENOUGH FOR ME

All trustful things with joyance cry aloud,
They seek not, and they find."

"Now will I once more bend,"
I said, "to humble service, wiser live ;
With hope for my heartfellow, fate my friend,
Take as the days may give.

"From murmuring will I cease,
And longer after folly follow not ;
But, lord of place enough for me and peace,
Will stand up in my lot."

THIS MY LIFE

I STRIVE to keep me in the sun ;
 I pick no quarrel with the years,
Nor with the Fates, not even the one
 That holds the shears.

I take occasion by the hand ;
 I 'm not too nice 'twixt weed and flower ;
I do not stay to understand ;
 I take mine hour.

The time is short enough at best.
 I push right onward while I may ;
I open to the winds my breast,
 And walk the way.

A kind heart greets me here and there ;
 I hide from it my doubts and fears.
I trudge, and say the path is fair
 Along the years.

THE HAPPIEST HEART

WHO drives the horses of the sun
Shall lord it but a day ;
Better the lowly deed were done,
And kept the humble way.

The rust will find the sword of fame,
The dust will hide the crown ;
Ay, none shall nail so high his name
Time will not tear it down.

The happiest heart that ever beat
Was in some quiet breast
That found the common daylight sweet,
And left to Heaven the rest.

WHAT WOULDST THOU MORE

THE sun and all the stars shine on thy head,
The grass and blossoms all are at thy feet ;
Nature's glad pageantries for thee are spread,
Her winds loosed for thee, seminal and
sweet ;
For thee young morn binds his bright sandals on ;
Pale evening leads thee to the mother-fold ;
The patient seasons serve thee : none are
gone
Of all the glories thronging from of old.
Hoar silence sings thee her primeval lay ;
Apt dream wraps round thee her enchanting light ;
August companions walk with thee by day,
They share thy bed in darkness of the
night :
The full years pour upon thee of their
store,
They gather for thy lap. What wouldst
thou more ?

THE GRACE OF THE GROUND

I

TO-DAY I stretch me on the shadowed grass,
And hear my heart say yet again to me,
"Fly with the birds, and let the spent
world be.

Float, float," it says, "with lightest things
that pass,

Leap with the gauze-winged vaulters ; glass
to glass,

Drink with the bees ; go with the gentle
throng

Deep ever, lost, in revel sweet and long,
The nearest, happiest children Nature has."

And once again I quit the wanton round
Of mockery, straight betake me to the
ground.

II

Wherever a green blade looks up,
A leaf lisps mystery,

THE GRACE OF THE GROUND

Whereso a blossom holds its cup
A mist rings land or sea,
Wherever voice doth utter sound
Or silence make her round, —
There worship ; it is holy ground.

MY CHOICE

I would rather be
In the shade of a tree,
 With a song and a handful of daisies,
Than the darling of victory
 'Mid the bray of the rabble's praises.

I would rather ride
On the wings inside,
 Whither hoofs and horns come not after,
Then take to me Fame for a bride,
 Rouged Fame, with her leer and her
 laughter.

MY FAME AND FORTUNE

I SING home songs, tuning the strings
 To lowly music of the ground ;
I sing the humble, happy things
 The seasons bring me, on their round.

I fellow with the day and night,
 To share their fortune and their fame ;
Among the names the wild flowers write
 Be mine, or let me have no name.

LOVE

THE MYSTIC KINSHIP

Not a thing that lives and moves
But the mystic kinship proves ;
In the deep, the blue above,
 All the mid-air ways along —
 Hark ! the same eternal song
Singing on the lips of Love.

Purl of stream and twirl of leaf —
There the voice of joy and grief,
Love's divine, undying art.
 Waving grass and swaying tree,
 Swinging of the star and sea —
'T is the beating of thy heart.

WE MAY LOVE

FROM the withered, bitter ground
Every sweet has taken leave?
Joy, there's none of sight or sound,
Naught to do but sit and grieve?
Look — the blue! bent close above,
Close above;
While it hovers we may love
We may love.

THE HOUR SUPREME

ON Nature's round
The stillness passes into sound ;
Which is most musical,
Song or the interval
When the silence stirs, to be
A voice, a melody ?

On Nature's way
From out the dawning comes the day ;
Which would the nice eye choose,
The noon-gold or the hues
When the shadow of the night
Wakes, smiling into light ?

Beauty is bride
In midsummer or at springtide ?
In June her solsticy
Or when the pale mists be,
When the clod feels some warm power
At work, and lo, a flower !

THE HOUR SUPREME

Ay, when is bliss
The sweetest that it ever is?
When the loved one is at rest
Upon the lover's breast,
Or when he first may dare
To dream he feels her there?

WHEN LOVE COMES

HAST seen the morn, the first light in his
 eyes,
Look loveliness along the sullen skies?
Hast marked spent day, slow journeying,
 backward turn,
Though, one by one, the stars begin to burn?
Hast seen the dream-shapes, pale with win-
 ter yet,
Warming wood-spaces for the violet?
Hast heard the spring-song on the wild
 March air,
And all the world's a lover listening there?
Hast heard the lay the bush-bird long did
 keep,
Only, at last, to sing it in his sleep?
Hast heard the brook, where all the boughs
 are old,
Run under them, lulling the leafy fold?
Not yet thou knowest beauty, melody;
They wait the day Love comes and speaks
 to thee.

THE CUP OF BLISS

THE reddest rose, the bluest violet,
Take them and bray them in a golden jar,
Drip in the clearest dewdrops ; nor forget
The wandering odor where old shadows
are,
Nor the night-music when the brook is loud,
Nor that far voice when all the silence
grieves ;
Stir these with motion of the one lone cloud,
Of winds that run along the sunny leaves.
The last, add glances of the moonlit stream,
Pink tremblings from the edges of the
dawn,
A dash of rapture only youth dare dream,
And the dear pang it leaves when it is
gone.
Pour, now, and drink. Is it the cup of
bliss ?
Thou canst not, then, remember love's
first kiss.

THE WAY TO LEARN

THE way to learn how well I love you, Dear?

Ask any of the gossip winds that blow,
The thousand flowers that burn it where
they glow,

The happy hours that hold the summer here;

Question the sound, the silence, far and near,

The brook, which sings it or must cease
to flow,—

Ask all the blissful things above, below.

Their answer, Sweet — of that I have no fear;

For I believe all life below, above,

Is leagued with love as light is with the
day,

That heaven and earth aye take the
lover's part.

But should all other voices mock my love,

You will not heed them; you will turn
away,

Content to have the answer of your
heart.

THOU AND I

LOVE, I would have thee as the snow is,
white

And pure on hilltops of the winter day ;
Thou shouldst have sovereign rule, the
spirit sway

Of beauty, wide and shining as the light.
Thou shouldst be as the evening star is,
bright

As heaven can make it ; all thy summer
way

The melodies of June should sing and play
In thee, the darling of the day and night.

But I would have thee human first and last,
One not untouched by trouble, sought of
sin,

Thine innocence not accident, but
choice.

Fit then my service : I should have no past,
No future ; newly would my life begin,
Obedient to the music of thy voice.

I KEEP THY MEMORY

I KEEP thy memory as the hilltops hold
The sun when light has left the valley way ;
With dream of thee I lengthen out the
day :
Nor dark does shut thee out, nor slumber-
fold.
Day sinking, up the lovely stars are rolled ;
The hill forgets the peerless sun in play
Of feebler fires ; but thou dost with me
stay :
My night, my midnight, wears the morn-
ing gold.
I keep thy memory, and I count it truth
That love, once come to men, shall never
go ;
I keep thy memory, and the world is
fair,
Yea, beautiful it is with fadeless youth.
Loving may be but dreaming. Even so,
The heaven in my heart, I keep it there.

LE SONNET D'ARVERS

A FLAME — an instant, secret, mystic thing —
Burns in my soul, and shall forever burn.
The harm is done ; in vain were murmuring ;
For she that kindled it will never learn
Whose hand it was. She will not even
turn

To me, though to her garment-hem I cling ;
Nor one of all the days to be will bring
Me strength to speak to her. I can but
yearn.

Albeit God made her tender and so sweet,
Love sets for naught the music of her feet.
For naught love follows her with soft com-
mand ;

She hears stern duty only, night and day.
Reading these very verses, she will say,
“ Who is this woman ? ” and nowise under-
stand.

LOVE AND GRIEF

WOULDST hear strange music only the
dreamer knows,
Breath sweeter than breathing of winds that
have been with the rose?

Wouldst see strange light that deep in the
shadow plays,
Wouldst pluck the secret from out the heart
of the days?

Then follow Love and that other who feeds
on her sweet;
Yea, follow Love and Grief, and fall low
at their feet.

THE LOST LAMB

My heart, you happy wandered
Along the sunny hill,
All day a-singing, singing,
As the happy shepherd will.

The friendly blue of heaven
Looked on you from above;
'T was joyance all for the shepherd
And the little lambs of love.

Oh, when the shadows gathered,
And the damp upon the rock,
Heart, heart, poor silly shepherd,
Why did you count the flock !

ONE

ONE whitest lily, reddest rose,
None other such the summer knows;
Of bird or brook one perfect tune,
And sung is all the sweet of June.

Once come and gone, the one dear face,
Forever empty is its place;
But one far voice the lover hears,
Calling across the waste of years.

NAMELESS

SHALT thou be beauty's dream, her sweetest
thought?

No; thought scarce is ere it is not.

And dare I make thee love's low melody?
Nay; silence, then no more of thee.

Shalt thou be morning, wonder of the light?
No; day, then shadow of the night.

And art thou summer's red, unrivalled rose?
Not that; love sighs, "How soon it goes!"

HOW DAREST THOU WAIT

LIQUID as lies the wave the hilltop lies,
The rocks are mobile as the breeze that
 strays
Past them to twirl the dust on summer
 ways;

The stars, they have the flight of butterflies,
The sun is as the ember in the grate :
Once more I cry, Love me ! How darest
 thou wait ?

MY SHEPHERDESS

SHE lives, she lives up in the hills,
Where mists and eagles are ;
Blithe shepherdess of rocks and rills,
'Twixt mortal and a star.

Of acorns is her necklace made,
And reddest berries found ;
While slender vines, in glossy braid,
About her brow are bound.

No fairy foots it half so light,
A-dancing on the green ;
Nor curls a sunny cloud so bright,
The pines and sky between.

My shepherdess of rocks and rills !
We dwell the world above ;
She lives and loves up in the hills,
And I live in her love.

SOMEWHERE

THE weasel thieves in silver suit,
The rabbit runs in gray ;
And Pan takes up his frosty flute
To pipe the cold away.

The flocks are folded, boughs are bare,
The salmon take the sea ;
And O my fair, would I somewhere
Might house my heart with thee !

MY FAIREST FAIR

THERE is, they say, no sweetest rose,
There is no fairest face ; for fancy grows
 Its own deceiver.

But, right or wrong, what does love care ?
I say, " World over, only one 's all fair,"
 And so believe her.

A THOUGHT

CAME a little lonely thought ;
 Straight toward my heart 't was flying.
Out I reached — 't would not be caught ;
 I could hear it sighing.

Whither bound I cannot say —
 Than thought there 's nothing fleeter —
But I know, lodge where it may,
 Only love is sweeter.

DREAM AND A DAY

How many happy summers yet,
How many times the bird, the rose,
Ere 't is to sleep and to forget?
There 's never a heart that knows.

How oft shall come the summer weather
Along the fields, the greenwood way,
And lover and loved one be together?
There 's never a heart can say.

And ever a heart why should it say?
What would love have of joy or sorrow?
Love, with its dream, its dream and a day,
Has never a thought for the morrow.

AT PARTING

WITH tears and kisses let me go.

Love not too deep

To kiss and weep,

That love have many, many ;

But one love, oh,

It doth not so !

Pale lips it has and tearless eyes ;

Broken, motionless it lies,

A flower amid death's mysteries,

A rose that dies.

With tears and kisses let me go ;

Such love have many, many.

That other love my heart would know,

Or know not any.

FATE'S TABLET

You must have known her had you seen her
face,

That moment turned away, as by she
passed ;

It must have told you, that confiding grace,
Of one could not but love you to the last.

And had you heard her voice you must have
known

She little talked and softly all that day ;
Something, perhaps, was on the June winds
blown

To her could not but love you aye and
aye.

You did not see her, and you did not hear ;
She saw not, heard not you as by she
passed ;

And it once more was written, *Year to year,*
Two shall go, seeking, seeking to the last.

TIME AND THE HOUR

ONE brave look, holding hers —

There where the warm noontide
Washed all the long walk through the firs —
Fate had been defied.

One low word slowly said,

With Nature's own sure art,
His had not been a bended head,
Hers a broken heart.

Stern, unreturning hours

Came with that summer day.
They came and went : love's path of flowers
Was a desert way.

BLEEDING HEART AND BROKEN WINGS

FEW listened to the lonely singer's lay.
Our life, it is a little day ;
He sang, and vanished in the valley dim,
Where, all in vain, praise followed him.

Our life, it is a bitter day.
One gave for naught a loving heart away ;
They brought white lilies, but too late for *her*
To see how like herself they were.

Heaven-taught, the maiden loves, the poet
sings.

Dear bleeding heart, poor broken wings !
So has it ever been through all the years, —
For song the sorrow, for love the tears.

LIFE

CALM

HAST thou been down into the deep of
thought
Until the things of time and sense are
naught;
Hast sunk — sunk — in that tideless under-
deep
Fathoms below the little reach of sleep?

Hast visited the depth where he must go
That would the secrecies of being know?
Hast been a guest where, lost to smiles
and tears,
The quiet eye looks on beyond the years?

Hast thou been down into the deep of
thought
Beloved of prophets, where their work is
wrought?
Then doubt is whelmed in hope, and care
in calm,
The tumult melts in music of a psalm.

THE GRACIOUS FAILURE

IN the poet's world, shamed is his art
Before the vibrant silence at his heart.
And well it is that, spurning perfect speech,
Plays the wild beauty always out of reach ;

Once by some god-poet caught and bound
The wavering light, the subtile pulse of
 sound,
That ere it come is gone, — what singer,
 then,
Would ever dare to lift his voice again !

THE POETS OF OLD ISRAEL

OLD Israel's readers of the stars,
I love them best. Musing, they read,
In embers of the heavenly hearth,
High truths were never learned below.
They asked not of the barren sands,
They questioned not that stretch of death ;
But upward from the humble tent
They took the stairway of the hills ;
Upward they climbed, bold in their trust,
To pluck the glory of the stars.
Faith falters, knowledge does not know,
Fast, one by one, the phantoms fade ;
But that strange light, unwavering, lone,
Grasped from the lowered hand of God,
Abides, quenchless forevermore.

“IS THERE ANY WORD FROM
THE LORD?”

(JEREMIAH XXXVII, 17)

DAYLONG a craven cry goes up :
“The people drink a bitter cup,
They languish, gathering stones for bread,
Brave faith is fallen, the old hope dead.”
The babblers will not cease :
“The people have no peace.”

Trust is outworn, naught can be done,
There is no good under the sun,
The blue sky fades, the waters fail,
The strong hand shakes, the warriors wail ;
Daylong the craven cry,
“The people faint, they die.”

Turn to the wall our faces, we
That vanquish air and earth and sea !
The sun shines yonder ; somewhere glows
The old first hope, bright as it rose,

IS THERE ANY WORD

The hope whose accent high
Shall brand this whining lie.

If doubts, risen idols of the Nile,
Again the hallowed land defile,
Thunder yet clothes green Horeb's crown ;
Let Sinai speak, and smite them down.
Life nests yet in the clod,
Israel has still his God.

You, seers and prophets, poets, may
See yet the good gold in the day.
Still red at heart, arise, arise !
Sing back the blue into the skies,
The green into the grass,
And bid the phantoms pass.

Once more, blest messengers, declare
That love still lives, that life is fair ;
Say knowledge knows not, trust is all,
And crush these wise which writhe and
crawl ;

Wake, wake, your strains of fire !
God's for us — strike the lyre !

GREAT IS TO-DAY

Out on a world that has run to weed !
The great tall corn is still strong in his seed ;
Plant her breast with laughter, put song in
 your toil,
The heart is still young in the old mother-
 soil :
Never bluer heavens nor greener sod
Since the round world rolled from the hand
 of God.

The clouds keep their promise ; believe, and
 sow !
There are sweet banks yet where the south
 winds blow ;
The sun still plunges and mounts again,
The new moons fill when the old moons
 wane :
There's sunshine and bird-song, and red
 and white clover,
And love lives yet, skies under and over.

GREAT IS TO-DAY

Is wisdom dead now Solon's no more ?
Are the children done playing at the Muses'
door ?

While your Plato, your Shakespeare, goes
down to the tomb,

His brother stirs in the good mother-womb ;
There's dreaming of daisies and running of
brooks,

Yes, life enough left to put in the books.

Out on a world that has run to weed !
The lusty hours, as of old they breed,
And the man child thrives. For your Jacob
no tears ;

Rachel is there, at the end of the years.
The waving of wheat, of the tall strong corn !
His heart-blood is water who wanders for-
lorn.

THE FALLEN

(IN MEMORIAM, MAY 30)

I

TOLL the slow bell,
Toll the low bell,
 Toll, toll,
 Make dole
For them that wrought so well.
 Come, come,
 With muffled drum
And wailing lorn
Of dolorous horn
The solemn measure slow
Toll and beat and blow ;
Put out all glories that adorn
The sweet, unheeding morn.
 Come, come ;
 To the muffled drum
And the sad horns
Bring flowers for them that took the thorns.

THE FALLEN

Knell, knell ;
Let the slow bell
 Be struck and the troubled drum ;
 Come, come,
The solemn measure slow
Toll and beat and blow ;
 Rebuke this bright, unpitying light.
The solemn measure slow
Toll and beat and blow
 For them our beauty and our might
Gone on the unreturning way,
 For them that took the night
That we might have the day.

II

Hark ! voices, joyous voices break
From the green martyr-mounds : “ Wake,
 wake !
The Lord our God, once more He saith,
This hand made all — it made not death.
Let the blithe bells ring,
The May air sing ;
 Strike the quick drum,
 Smite sorrow dumb ;

THE FALLEN

Blow the glad horn,
This glad May morn ;
Lift the valiant measures high
Of the proud earth and sky
 For them that tent
 Beyond the firmament,
And on the field of light
Still gather to the fight.

“ Blow the glad horn,
This glad May morn ;
 Stanch, undaunted measures blow,
 Gathering courage as they go, —
Valiant measures high,
Carolled of earth and sky ;
Set the bright, triumphal stave
 For them that fought so well,
 That faltered not nor fell ;
For them and all whereso yon colors
 wave,
Unto the four winds given
And the proud earth and heaven.
There believe and battle they
Whose face is toward the day,

THE FALLEN

The ever-living light,
Where is no night,
Where is no death nor shadow of the
grave.”

THE VOICE OF THE SEQUOIA

I THOUGHT it spoke to me,
The lingering spirit of the giant tree

Fallen on the western shore, —
The redwood Saul with fourteen centuries
hoar :

“ In this huge husk I yet
Abide — Who may the old home soon
forget? —

“ Abide long as I may,
Dreaming my dreams until they fade away.

“ The morning I did push
My twigs the little height of yonder
bush,

“ Ruddy Justinian saw,
Busied betwixt the bishops and his Law ;

THE VOICE OF THE SEQUOIA

“ Mahomet knew those skies,
Lithe-limbed, the fire of prophets in his
eyes.

“ I can recall the day
The Frank set forth upon his warrior's
way —

“ He that could Cæsar be
And Alfred too, the flower of empery ; —

“ The day great Saladin
Threw open Judah's gate, and entered in,

“ When Christian lance and sword
Dealt all that death, nor broke the alien
horde.

“ But there were happier things
And lovelier mingled in my murmurings :

“ The woodland wail divine
Of Dante's grief — Dante, the human
pine ;

THE VOICE OF THE SEQUOIA

- “ Spring’s earliest, sweetest note
She tossed in air from English Chaucer’s
throat ;
- “ News of the fateful fleet
Sailing to lead all peoples to my feet ;
- “ Tales of the Titan lone,
Writing his poems in the Roman stone ;
- “ Of him, the wonder-child,
On whom Beauty and all the Muses
smiled,
- “ Whom Nature loved so well .
She must her dearest secret to him tell,
- “ And wish she had yet more
To give ; (she did not know her heart be-
fore ;
- “ Man knew not his ; for when
Her Shakespeare sang the world grew
young again ;)

THE VOICE OF THE SEQUOIA

“ Of him whose symphony,
Rhythmic with swingings of the star and
sea,

“ Embroiled in blank mid-air
Heaven's host and Hell's, nor did too
greatly dare ;

“ Of Pisa's son who read
The Open Book, undaunted whither led,

“ Charting the haughty way
Newton would follow in the broader day.

“ Again and yet again
The burdened wind. There dawned a
morning when

“ It said thy sires cried out
To the free hills ; I heard the answering
shout—

“ Well freed thy land ; the sea
Rolls all her waves 'twixt it and tyranny —

THE VOICE OF THE SEQUOIA

“ I caught a kindred cry
From France the beautiful ; she hung the
sky

“ With horrors while she thrust
Oppression through and trod him in the
dust.

“ Now 't was, the Furies ran
And loosed, hawk-beaked and clawed, the
Corsican.

“ Soon drooped that phantom wing ;
But hark ! proud Life hears yet her
Goethe sing,

“ Hears Wordsworth ; still does ease
Her heart with those high, wordless melodies

“ Beyond the poet's flight, —
Beethoven's measures, music's utter
might.

THE VOICE OF THE SEQUOIA

“ Again and yet again
The burdened wind. One of the new-time
men,

“ Goodly and tall and fair
He stood, trusting the hand that planted
there ;

“ He took the upper wind
I knew — Lincoln, the cedar of his kind.

“ Those sad new days ye know.
They fade from me ; and it is better so.”

The voice fell fainter now,
As when on summer eves it fails the
bough ;

No further did it say,
But, sighing, drifted with the dreams away.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

FIRST of the deedful, giant few,
So high in Freedom's grace he grew,
To-day his voice she leans to hear
Across a hundred noisy year ;
The virtues meet in him to vie,
 As, in autumn weather,
 Sunset colors gather
Down the western sky,
 Divulging, ere they pass,
 The dyes of which the daylight was.

The lawless gods no more allot
 As in old Homer's tales ;
According as ourselves have wrought,
 So hang the honest scales :
Our brown-haired, blue-eyed Saul
Of battle, stalwart, tall,
 Must climb, unstayed,
 The heights he made.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

August, unfellowed to the last,
From height to height he passed ;
 The day-star of his race,
 He rose, he shone into his place.

Stands yet the Father as he stood,
Full statured, great, sublimely good.
 Before God's face he wrought ;
 It cannot come to naught.
As fate's was his right hand ;
He built, and it shall stand.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

HIS people called, and forth he came
As one that answers to his name ;
Nor dreamed how high his charge,
His privilege how large, —

To set the stones back in the wall
Lest the divided house should fall.
The shepherd who would keep
The flocks, would fold the sheep,

Humbly he came, yet with the mien
Presaging the immortal scene, —
Some battle of His wars
Who scaleth up the stars.

No flaunting of the banners bold
Borne by the haughty sons of old ;
Their blare, their pageantries,
Their goal, — they were not his.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

We called, he came ; he came to crook
The spear into the pruning-hook,
To toil, untimely sleep,
And leave a world to weep.

THE MAN WITH THE HOE

(A REPLY TO EDWIN MARKHAM)

“ Let us a little permit Nature to take her own way ; she better understands her own affairs than we.” — *Montaigne*.

NATURE reads not our labels, “ great ” and
“ small ” ;
Accepts she one and all

Who, striving, win and hold the vacant
place :
All are of royal race.

Him, there, rough-cast, with rigid arm and
limb,
The Mother moulded him,

Of his rude realm ruler and demigod,
Lord of the rock and clod.

With Nature is no “ better ” and no “ worse,”
On this bared head no curse.

THE MAN WITH THE HOE

Humbled it is and bowed ; so is he crowned
Whose kingdom is the ground.

Diverse the burdens on the one stern road
Where bears each back its load ;

Varied the toil, but neither high nor low.
With pen or sword or hoe,

He that has put out strength, lo, he is
strong.

Of him with spade or song

Nature but questions, " This one, shall he
stay ? "

She answers " Yea " or " Nay, "

" Well, ill, he digs, he sings " ; and he bides
on,
Or shudders, and is gone.

Strength shall he have, the toiler, strength
and grace,
So fitted to his place

THE MAN WITH THE HOE

As he leaned there, an oak where sea winds
 blow,
Our brother with the hoe.

No blot, no monster, no unsightly thing,
The soil's long-lineaged king ;

His changeless realm, he knows it and com-
 mands ;
Erect enough he stands,

Tall as his toil. Nor does he bow unblest ;
Labor he has, and rest.

Need was, need is, and need will ever be
For him and such as he.

Cast for the gap, with gnarlèd arm and
 limb,
The Mother moulded him ;

Long wrought, and moulded him with
 mother's care,
Before she set him there.

THE MAN WITH THE HOE

And aye she gives him, mindful of her own,
Peace of the plant, the stone ;

Yea, since above his work he may not rise,
She makes the field his skies.

See ! she that bore him, and metes out the
lot,
He serves her. Vex him not

To scorn the rock whence he was hewn, the
pit
And what was digged from it ;

Lest he no more in native virtue stand,
The earth-sword in his hand,

But follow sorry phantoms to and fro,
And let a kingdom go.

A TRILOGY FOR THIS TIME

I

FREEDOM

FREEDOM ! have we won it yet ?
To win it did our fathers set
Their strength, and build the home, the
State,
That, faithful, we
Should have the mastery over fate,
Forever free.

Yon flag, no hand dare tear it down ;
This proud, this high is our renown :
The nations look on us, and cry, —
“ Stanchly they hold
The heritage of liberty,
The faith of old ! ”

The flattering nations look from far.
Freemen we seem, yet slaves we are,

A TRILOGY FOR THIS TIME

Ironed with hateful gyves of greed ;

We cramp the place

Of him our brother, in his need,

We grind his face.

On freemen's ground the gold unearned

Is gold unowned ; be justice spurned,

Freedom holds off from low and high :

On freemen's sod

Whoso oppresses poverty

Reproaches God.

Freedom ! won not yet, not yet.

Freemen deal truly, nor forget

That, now and in all days to be,

Throughout the earth

Only one power can make men free, —

Unselfish worth.

II

THE GOLD OF HAVILAH

If reign you will in Havilah,

That land of plenty is your own ;

A TRILOGY FOR THIS TIME

But while you gather into bags
The gold, the banded onyx stone,
Masters, beware
The high words there,
The black space writ across with fire, —
The laborer is worthy of his hire.

Yellow the gold in Havilah,
The gold is yellow and is good ;
Lo, you may build of it your house,
May give of it for roof and food ;
But take you care
He has his share,
Hungry in body and in soul,
Outworn with digging for you in the hole.

Mad, phantom kings ! strive you to stand
As bywords and as things for mirth ?
Your kingdom's broken and plucked up ;
Long since He portioned out the earth,
And heaven too.
What would you do ?
Not all your gold can buy that trust, —
He raiseth up the poor from out the dust.

A TRILOGY FOR THIS TIME

III

THE HYSSOP IN THE WALL

You 'd be a taller thing,
You shrubs who grow not to the goodly
tree.
Wherefore? In low leaves, as in high, birds
sing
Their summer melody.

Never since time began
A stalk yet for the impartial light too
low.
June greens the meanest bush; the hum-
blest man,
Her warm winds on him blow.

Shrubs be, and there be trees,
But this stands fast: shine down the sun
and star
On these and those. What matter, those or
these,
Since all God's plants they are?

A TRILOGY FOR THIS TIME

You that would cast more shade,
Remember who it was that wrought you
small ;

He, and no other, He the cedar made,
The hyssop in the wall.

Blame not him at your side,
Him with the braver root and prouder
limb ;

Lift your bold mouths to heaven, and call
awide ;

The pattern is from Him.

Call, but first know that ills
Are every man's, as marrow in his
bone ;

That the Hand from one cup the measure
spills,

Be it of bread or stone ;

Know that all's poured for all ;

Alike for sweetest tree of field or wood
And you, the bitter hyssop in the wall,—
The evil and the good.

A TRILOGY FOR THIS TIME

This learned, it may draw nigher

To mortals then, the trustful prophet's
morn

When shall come up the myrtle from the
brier,

The fir-tree for the thorn.

ON A PICTURE OF LINCOLN

I READ once more this care-worn, patient
face,

And learn anew that sorrow is the dower
Of him that sinks himself to lift his race
Into the seat of peace and power.

How beautiful the homely features grow,
How soft the light from out the mild, sad
eyes,
The gleam from deeps of grief the soul
must know,
To be so great, — so kind, so wise !

EMERSON

PLATO come back to turn a Yankee phrase,
Franklin recalled to lord the world of
soul —

So came he, so he journeyed, sane and
whole,

The Concord pilgrim on the upper ways.

Born to her lap, his heart was ever May's.

In vernal terms he read to us the scroll

Of time ; he chanted from the magic roll :

We knew the joy and beauty of the days.

He read to us until his sight grew dim —

Blinded with brightness from beyond the
sun —

Then followed he the glory from afar.

But not until a race had learned of him

The murmurs of eternity that run

Through human hearts, the blossom
and the star.

SOCRATES

BROAD, squat, flat-nosed, thick-lipped and
onion-eyed,

Such the teacher's form, his satyr's face,
As forth he stood, and swept the shams aside
In Athens' market-place.

Great souls go not as water and as wind ;
Still the world that strangest figure sees,
His,— bodied right and reason, sire of mind,
God's motley, Socrates.

THE IMMORTALITY OF MIGHT

THE fortress proud, the haughty wall
With frowning gate — they shake, they fall;
Kings, kingdoms — as a dream they pass,
They are as wind-waves on the grass.

Passes the last remembrancer
To tell us that the mighty were ;
In death's one trench shall Shakespeare lie,
The common night close Cæsar's eye.

Believe it not. Once might has birth,
It dwells forever in the earth.
Does glory flame, there Shakespeare is ;
Cæsar strives yet — that wreath is his.

THE SPHINX

It is now forty years ago
I stretched to her mine empty hand,
Pilgrim in that waste land ;
“Teach me,” I prayed, “make me to know,
Thou silent sitter in the sand !”
From out the gray waste, there,
Naught but the old unfathomed stare.

To-day I went, as long ago —
My hair as gray as was the sand —
A gift-rose in my hand.
“Speak not,” I said ; “I need not know.
Does *this* aught understand ? ”
Shallowed the fathomless stare ;
She smiled, the red thing was so fair.

THE HAND

Lo, it locks
The hill flower in the rocks,
Skeins the willow,
Manes the billow,
Sets the cedar straight,
Paints the she-bird's mate,
Hangs the apple on its tree,
Steers the cloud-ship on her sea,
Fires the dewdrop and, afar,
The haughty rondure of the star,
Gives the loosed wind his track,
Brings the summer back,
Binds the morning's crown,
And lets the darkness down :
So doth the Hand, the Power,
That giveth thee thine hour.

THE VALLEY OF SHADOW

AT THE SIGN OF THE SPADE

ON and on, in sun and shade,
Footing over flat and grade,
King and beggar, foe and friend,
Come, at last, to the journey's end ;
Stop man and maid
At the Sign of the Spade.

Sage or zany, slave or blade,
Drab or lady, the rôle is played ;
Over grass and under sun
Past one hostel trudges none :
Stop man and maid
At the Sign of the Spade.

TO DUSTY NOTHING

WOULDST thou the kingliest head of old
renown?

The desert cubs toy with his tumbled crown.

Wouldst thou the proudest fane of Greece
or Rome?

Sand and the wild-beast foot are on its
dome.

The sum and top of grandeur and of grace,
Mark them,—yon blots upon the great
gray face.

TEARS

Not in the time of pleasure
 Hope doth set her bow ;
But in the sky of sorrow,
 Over the vale of woe.

Through gloom and shadow look we
 On beyond the years :
The soul would have no rainbow
 Had the eyes no tears.

TO HOPE

Ah, Hope, no more !
From your sweet, false art
Set free my heart ;
For I know that the flake will follow
On the airy way of the swallow,
That the drift will lie where the lily blows,
And the icicle hang from the stem of the
rose :

O Hope — no more !

Nay, Hope, once more !
With your olden smile
Once more beguile ;
Though I know that the flake must follow
On the airy way of the swallow,
That the drift must lie where the lily blows,
And the icicle hang from the stem of the
rose :

O Hope — once more !

I NEED NOT HEAR

I NEED not hear the moan they make,
The winds on hill and shore ;
I need not hear the hearts that break
For joys that are no more.

Call not, O naked, wailing Fall,
O man's unhappy race !
One drifting leaf, it tells me all ;
'T is all in one pale face.

THE EAGLE

I SAW a wild bird on a rock,
By sun-fire tried and tempest-shock ;
Rider and tamer of the wind,
A king among his kingly kind.

Dim as the dim and quiet night,
He sat there, folded in his might ;
Still as the rock, so still and gray,
He sat the solemn hours away.

“Hears he,” I mused, “the melody,
The dream-sound, in the mountain tree ;
And does remembered glory thrill
That proudest spirit of the hill ? ”

Round his shut wings and humbled head,
A voice from out the silence said, —
*The eagle, when the day is done,
Forgets he faced the flaming sun.*

TO THE BITTER END

HE shed no tears, he made no moan ;
He bore his burden ; mute, endured the
years,
Eating his bread as it were not a stone :
He murmured not nor faltered, shed no
tears.

He toiled with neither hope nor plan ;
Ambition masked in tame humility
That yokes for equal draught the ox with
man,
None heard him speak again of what
might be.

Not once from him a craven cry ;
Patient as are the cattle of the stall,
Dumb as the tumbled clods that on him lie,
So patient, dumb, he toiled, so did he fall.

THE DRAWING OF THE LOT

ONE comes with kind, capacious hold,
But through his fingers slips the gold;
He with the talons, his the hands
That rake up riches as the sands.

One fats as does the ox unbroke;
Never on his red neck the yoke.
The pale, stooped thing, with heart and
 brain,
On him the weight of toil and pain.

One longs, — she with the full warm breast,
But no babe's head does on it rest;
On some starved slant a fool thought fair
Love's boon is thrust, and suckled there.

THE LOST SOUL

A LONE soul came to Heaven's hard gate,
Low at the warder's feet she fell ;
Sobbing, she said she had not knocked so
late
But for the many roads to Hell.

Stroking her bowed, unmothered head,
Up spoke the good old warder gray :
" This child, too fair, high up let her be led,
Past them that never lost the way."

THE BODY AND THE SOUL

I

PURE spirit, pure and strangely beautiful,
What body fled'st thou? Where in all this
dull,
Unlovely world was there such loveliness
That thou couldst wear it for thy fleshly
dress?

*Before this hour thou must have looked on
me;
As men look on old friends I look on thee.*

It cannot be. Far-wandering music blown
From heaven thy voice is. In what garden
grown
Wert thou, too lovely blossom, in what
vale?
Who wert thou ere the flushing cheek went
pale?

THE BODY AND THE SOUL

*The quick winds change, and change the fields
and sky;*

Look on me, look ! mayst know me by and by.

II

What hate dispatched thee out of Hell
To mock me ? Shapeless, smoky mass,
Thou hideous mist, I curse thee : pass !

*Time was when I was welcome to thy breast ;
I knew it as the wild bird knows her nest.*

Thou liest ! never on *that* fell
The eyes that met not instant blight.
Pass ! pass ! blot on God's light !

*Ay, through the portal whence this hour I
stole ;
Open thy breast to me, take back thy soul.*

POOR LITTLE JANE

WHAT shall be done with little Jane,
Little Jane who has lost her lover?
With the sun and rain of Lovers' Lane
Green is his grassy cover.

She has no joy of the summer sun,
And fearful things she sees
At the gate in the lane when day is done,
And there's wail in the faded trees.

She cannot laugh, she cannot weep,
And alas! that look in her eye.
Poor little Jane! 'T is but the sheep,
And she says the white dead go by.

LITTLE JUMP FOR JOY

I HAD a playmate when a boy,
His name was Little Jump for Joy;
When I was seven he, too, was seven,
He said that he was born in Heaven.

His yellow hair was very curly,
We were together late and early;
I thought, at least in summer weather,
We two should always be together.

But on a day long, long ago,
He left me — how, I hardly know;
Much as the sunlight leaves the day,
He shook his locks, and slipt away.

THE PAST

HAST heard those voices low that fare,
Unpiloted, along the heights of air, —

Far melodies, too faint for light,
Alone on upper pathways of the night?

The past calls in so sweet a tone
These strive and die, nor make it once
their own.

MY CHILDREN

DEAR buds of flesh and blood,
So dear, so dear to me,
I dread the thoughts that dwell
Upon the years to be.

More kind the early blight
Than are the ripening suns ;
To blossom is to fall,
My sweet, unfolding ones.

“Only the children’s hearts
Go down, unhurt, to rest !”
I hear the voice, and hold
You closer to my breast.

AT A GRAVE

I

(IN MEMORIAM S. P. C.)

As out of the dark the stars,
Broke forth the heavenly bars
Of passion strong, —
The wild bird's song,
Borne, wave on wave,
From a branch above a grave.

Mute heart, you, listening, heard
The music of the bird ;
'T was in your cry, —
“ A song had I,
But oh, I know
Of the dead asleep below ! ”

II

Oft I call, he nothing hears ;
Foolish is grief as death is wise.
The white peace chides me where he
lies, —
“ None would know again the years.”

IN MEMORIAM J. V. C.

I

THE SHADOW CAME

THE Shadow came ;
All the gentle, grieving quiet
Trembled with her name.

Dark is her door ;
Calls and calls the grieving quiet,
Answered nevermore.

II

AT A GRAVE

Beckoned the Comer Dim,
And she must follow him
To that far field whence summer never
goes,
But ever on the rose-tree dreams the
rose.

To earth she was so dear,
All pure things linger near,
As if she still were here ;

IN MEMORIAM J. V. C.

The grasses, glad
With motion once she had,
Stir them and wave
Upon her grave.

III

BY THE WESTERN SEA

The circling sea-birds to the ledge have flown,
The sun is sinking in the western sea ;
'T is not the loneliness nor yet the moan
Makes this far shore so full of pain for me.
I could be still the while these waves beat on,
I could have comfort of this wild unrest,
But for a radiant spirit, faded, gone,
Like the soft color lost, now, in the west.
The solitary dusk, the troubled wave,
The wind, the growing sorrow of the deep,
These would not hurt my heart but for the
grave
Here, where they left her when she fell
asleep.
I stand beside it, and I feel her hands
Reach to me. Oh, these lone, unknow-
ing sands !

IN MEMORIAM J. V. C.

IV

ASLEEP IN THE WEST

They led her East, they led her West,
She followed where they led ;
The way, it ran toward rest,
The one untroubled bed.

To her pale cheek the color came,
Whether on hill or wave, —
The flower with brighter flame
The nearer to the grave.

They led her East, they led her West,
She followed meek and still ;
The way, it ran toward rest —
She sleeps upon the hill.

Sometimes I think that Nature knows, —
Her native western skies,
The warm wind and the rose
Remember where she lies.

✓

THE WHITE BLOSSOM

It was in a still place of graves.
I asked the wind, whose faint dream-waves
Followed the mounds along, "What mean-
ing has
This flowret gladding all the grass,
This loved-one of the light,
Rooted in death-dark and long night?"

And the wind said: "Two things men lay
In death's unending night away, —
Their joys and sorrows. Sorrows I let sleep,
But the dear joys no grave may keep;
I lure them back. They know
My breath, they lean the way I blow."

UNTIL THE EVENING

No help in all the stranger-land,
O fainting heart, O failing hand ?

A morning and a noon,
Evening cometh soon.

The way is endless, friendless? No ;
God sitteth high to see below ;

A morning and a noon,
Evening cometh soon.

Look yonder on the purpling West ;
Erelong the glory and the rest.

A morning and a noon,
Evening cometh soon.

NO LONGER WITH THE YEARS

No hue of early Spring,
When first the fields and trees are fair,
Is beauteous as the shimmering
In Autumn's yellow hair.

No bird may build her nest
Where Summer puts her glory on,
But silence comes, a gentler guest,
When leaves and song are gone.

No light in loved one's eye,
No eloquence on lover's tongue,
Dwells tenderly as thoughts that lie
Dim memories among.

No dream, 'neath sun or star,
No gift of laughter or of tears,
Is sweet as the sleep of them that are
No longer with the years.

THE HEART OF NATURE

SPRING AND SUMMER
MORNING AND EVENING



THE INFORMAL COURTIER

COURTIER, in unpretending dress
Of all-excelling idleness,
No liegeman struts that can outshine
Me, in this good old garb of mine.

Young whirlwinds always ask me where
They turn round dances in the air ;
And I am masker on the green
When firefly lanterns light the scene.

The squirrel, sharp in tooth and eye,
Salutes me as I saunter by ;
Yes, ere the robin starts her nest
She asks which bough I think the best.

Oft am I hid with bats at noon,
Abroad with owls at rise of moon ;
With wary hare and sleeky mole
I am the same congenial soul.

THE INFORMAL COURTIER

I take the breezes by the arm,
And tramp at will my neighbor's farm ;
Herself I serve, without a care,
Her Highness of the Open Air.

AT THE HYLA'S CALL

THE things the sun and the south wind do
When the green o' the year is peeping
through,

And Joy is abroad, and the dancing hours
Know only the clocks of the leaves and
flowers !

When the squirrel-cups are brimming with
rain,

When blackbirds are come and the needly
grain ;

When the ribbon-snake slips from his dismal
house

To the nest of the bird and the nest of the
mouse ;

In the thick of the meadow and greenwood
smells,

Of the minstrelsy by the willowed wells ;
By the brook, and the bridge of lichen'd
log,

With the darting trout and the vaulting frog ;

AT THE HYLAS CALL

By the upland bunches the rabbit knows
Ere the great sun comes, when the great sun
goes ;

Along warm walls where ivies bind
And braid the sunshine and weave the
wind, —

It's to rouse and go forth at the hyla's call,
It's to learn the sweet secrets, one and all :
It's to follow him with the locks love-curled,
To wander with Joy to the end of the world.

THE NEST IN THE VINE

WEAVE, bird in the green, green leaves!

Wind in with every thread

The shine of the earth and sky ;

Twine heaven's blue and the rose's red,
And the wind-sweet singing by.

Weave, bird in the green, green leaves !

The lustre from east to west,

The melody line by line,

Braid it, shade it, into the nest,
The home in the heart of the vine.

Weave, bird in the green, green leaves !

All happy color and sound,

By love's own cunning curled,

Wind it, bind it, round and round ;
Build in the bliss of the world.

THE BEECHES BRIGHTEN

THE beeches brighten for young May,
And young grass shines along her way ;
Joy bares to her his sunny head,
Leaned over brook and blossom-bed ;
The smell of Spring fills all the air,
And wooing birds make music there.
There 's naught of sound or sight to grieve,
From quiring morn to quiet eve ;
Only the shadow thought will cast, —
This loveliness, it cannot last.
The merry field, the ringing bough,
Will silent be as voiceful now ;
Chill, warning winds will hither roam,
The Summer's children hasten home ;
That blue solicitude of sky
Bent over beauty doomed to die,
Ere long will, pitying, witness here,
The yielded glory of the year.

THE OLD TREE

Yon shape, so pitiful, once stood,
The Saul of his proud brotherhood ;
Tempest, at last, and length of days
Have mastered ; lo, the king decays.

Time was when gravely to his shade,
At noon, the lordlier cattle strayed ;
And from his top, at morn, rang clear
The bravest song of all the year.

He sighs, is silent, sighs again, —
“ One fate we have, O sons of men !
These empty hands upheld in air,
It is your own last reach of prayer.”

FANCY'S SONG

HEAR fancy's song ;
The warm day long,
Like her melody
No other sound may be ;
Not the luscious croon
Of sunny noon,
Not the lullaby
When the day winds die,
And the blossoms rest
On the meadow's breast,
And the stopt clouds lie
 White asleep
 In the deep
Of the silent sky.

Hear fancy's song ;
The warm night long,
 So sweet her melody,
 For her dear sake
 The roses wake,

FANCY'S SONG

And the pale waves lie and glisten,
And the quiet sea-shells listen,
Nor sing any more of the sea.

THE WISE PIPER

WHEN other birds sing not,
 Rifting the dreary rain,
Then cheerly, sparrow, you
 Pipe your timely strain.

A hasty, wayward song,
 Right faulty, I dare say ;
But who will find it so
 On a rainy day ?

The critics nod, not you,
 Minstrel of drizzly skies ;
Sparrow, you know your hour.
 Would we were half as wise !

THE WOOD-THRUSH

WHEN lilies by the river fill with sun,
And banks with clematis are overrun ;
When winds are weighed with fern-sweet
from the hill,
And hawks wheel in the noontide hot and
still ;
When thistle-tops are silvered, every one,
And fly-lamps flicker ere the day is done, —
Nature bethinks her how to crown these
things.
At twilight she decides : the wood-thrush
sings.

THE WEEDS

MEN scorn them, but the wiser day
Looks never from the weeds away.
They honor him as best they may,
And so their humble summer goes.

Sometimes I think the soft winds stay
With them the longest, in their play,
And all the sweet things to them say
They but say over to the rose.

TO A HUMMING-BIRD

VOYAGER on golden air,
Type of all that 's fleet and fair,
 Incarnate gem,
 Live diadem !
Stay, forget lost Paradise,
Star-bird fallen from happy skies. —

Vanished ! Earth is not his home.
Onward, onward must he roam,
 Swift passion-thought,
 In rapture wrought ;
Issue of the soul's desire,
Plumed with beauty and with fire.

SUMMER NOON

THE dust, unlifted, lies as first it lay
When on his dewy path came up the day ;

The spider-web stirs not ; on seas of air,
The thistle-ship, becalmed, rocks idly there ;

The fern-leaves curl, the wild rose sweetness
 spends
Rich as at eve the honeysuckle lends ;

The creeping cattle feed far up the hill,
The blithest birds have hid, the wood is
 still ;

On daisied dials, pointing flower to flower,
The shadow-hands have reached the golden
 hour.

AUGUST

MUTE the ferny woodland ways,
Hushed the merry meadow-lays ;
Stillness all and heavy haze
Of the charmèd August days.
In the hollow, on the steep,
Dwells a silence long and deep ;
Not the smallest whisper, now,
Of the secrets of the bough ;
In his glory hid, alone,
Sits the hill god on his throne.

THE WINDS

WE move across the morning lake
Soon as the dawns begin,
The evening lamps of gold we break
When the stars are looking in.

We wake with morn, and forth we go,
We follow after day ;
Like thoughts we wander to and fro,
Like dreams we pass away.

We help the brightness where it weaves
The hill his glittering crown ;
We come among the valley leaves,
They flutter up and down.

We rouse at noon the sleepy reeds,
And they make melody ;
We fret the meads, and set the weeds
A-swinging blissfully.

THE WINDS

We linger where the roses are
When warmth and light are gone ;
We take their sweet, and bear it far
To her whose cheek is wan.

We bring her wilding melody,
Beyond the singer's art ;
Sweeter than in the summer tree
It trembles at her heart.

The living meet us, whither led,
We greet them as we blow ;
We bend the grasses on the bed
Of them that never know.

THE WIND

THE yellow fox
Has his bed in the rocks ;
The brown bird, in the tree
Her nest has she ;
But the wind, come forth
Of south and north,
Of east and west,
Where shall he rest ?

The snake, the eft,
Slips into the cleft ;
The marmot sleeps sound
In the under-ground ;
But the wind of the hill
Is wandering still ;
And the wind of the sea,
When sleepeth he ?

The clouds of the air,
They slumber there ;

THE WIND

Flowers droop the head,
And the leaves lie dead ;
But the wind, the wind,
What rest shall he find ?
When shall he roam
The wild road home ?

TO THE EVENING STAR

A SOUND as of the falling leaves
While yet the summer dies,
When the tired wind no longer grieves,
And only the silence sighs ;

A grace as of the mist that clings
In tops of faded trees,
Or where the gray-beard thistle swings
In pastures of the bees ;

A scent as of the wilding rose
Fond Summer's heart must keep,
In dreamland of the under-snows
Sweetening all her sleep ;

A fair face out of memory
And love's long brooding made,
Too fair for rude reality,
Too real for a shade ; —

TO THE EVENING STAR

Are these thy gift, lone Winter-star,
Hung 'twixt the night and day ?
They come with thee, and from afar ;
Chance up thy golden way.

MEMORY

SOFT follower of the early star,
Once more I feel you drawing near.
Come! for my evening is not come
Till you are here.

You make it — as yourself is made —
Of loveliest, sweet, untroubled things,
Fled with love's day. I feel love's night
Fall from your wings.

EVENING RAIN

TWILIGHT down the west
Wanders once again ;
With a gentler guest
Singing in her train.

Hearkens every breast,
Every heart and brain :
Peace, oh, peace is best !
Runs the sweet refrain.

So the world is blest,
Joy is not nor pain ;
Love itself learns rest
Of the summer rain.

EVENING

I

THE birds have hid, the winds are low,
The brake is awake, the grass aglow :
The bat is the rover,
No bee on the clover,
The day is over
And evening come.

The heavy beetle spreads her wings,
The toad has the road, the cricket sings :
The bat is the rover,
No bee on the clover,
The day is over
And evening come.

II

Now is Light, sweet mother, down the
west,
With little Song upon her breast ;
She took him up, all tired with play,
And fondly bore him far away.

EVENING

While he sleeps, one wanders in his stead,
A fainter glory round her head ;
She follows happy waters after,
Leaving behind low, rippling laughter.

III

The bird is silent overhead,
The beast has laid him down ;
The neighbored marbles watch the dead,
The steeple guards the town.

The south winds feel their doubtful course
Toward sweet in thickets found ;
The leaves reveal the faltering force
'Twixt silentness and sound.

SUNSET IN THE REDWOODS

THE sky is lilac, the sky is rose ;
Fainter and fainter the redwood glows ;
The winds would be still ;
The dove is calling,
The dusk is falling,
On the yellow hill.

Lullaby, lullaby clucks the quail ;
Faster and faster the colors fail ;
The winds grow still.
The dove, is he calling ?
'T is the soft dusk falling
On the purple hill.

Lost is the lilac, lost the rose,
In the shadow the rabbit knows ;
The winds are still ;
The dove is dreaming,
The love-star gleaming
Over the darkened hill.

TWILIGHT

HID ways have winds that lightly shake
The silver willows, half-awake,
Mysterious paths the moonbeams take
Across the shadowed mountain-lake ;
The soul in deeper secret goes
Behind the lilac and the rose
In skies of evening, far away,
Beyond the flight of night and day.

AUTUMN AND WINTER
ANIMALIA

FOR A DAY

HEARKEN Summer's song
All her glad path along :
 Hand and heart together,
Come while yet you may ;
 In the sunny weather
Walk the happy way ;
Let none delay, let none delay ;
Love is only for a day.

Hearken Autumn's song
All her sad path along :
 Yet a little wander
Down the happy way ;
 In the shadow, yonder,
Waits the spectre gray ;
None says him nay, none says him nay ;
Life is only for a day.

TO THE FALL WIND

THAT I might borrow your voice, Fall Wind,
To utter the sorrow of human kind ;
 To speak for speechless tears,
 For the hopes and fears
 Of the weariful years !

That you might lend me your voice, Fall
 Wind,
To tell of the sorrow of human kind ;
 Fall Wind, your voice to grieve
 For the hopes that deceive
 And the hearts that believe !

THE LAST DANCE OF THE LEAVES

THERE 's revel in the withered close ;
The wind of Autumn wakes and blows.
Now it laughs, and now it grieves ;
Weird the measure that it weaves
For the dances of the yellow leaves.

The sad grass pale and paler grows,
Gray Death, from vale to hill he goes ;
Still the wind, it half deceives :
Weird the measure that it weaves
For the dances of the dying leaves.

SNOWFLAKES

FALLING all the night-time,
Falling all the day,
Silent into silence,
From the far-away ;

Stilly host unnumbered,
All the night and day
Falling, falling, falling
From the far-away, —

Never came like glory
To the fields and trees,
Never summer blossoms
Thick and white as these.

Falling all the night-time,
Falling all the day,
Follow, follow, follow,
Fold it soft away ;

SNOWFLAKES

Folding, folding, folding,
Fold the world away,
Souls of flowers drifting
Down the winter day.

PROSPERO OF THE NORTH

YOUNG day has flung his saffron banner out,
And the first beamy spear-tips prick the
world.

Straightway my wee ones will I set to work.
The hemlocks listen, the sullen brook runs
dark,

Grim joy glows in the bones of the hoar
oak ;

How strong he is, and shapely ! — Hither,
chicks !

First, you that know the chambers of the
winds,

See that they all are barred ; let not a breath
Come forth of them. This done, lay hold,
draw up

The sagging cloud that hangs behind yon
mount,

And stretch his leaden length from east to
west. —

The mild, the social, maples lean this way,

PROSPERO OF THE NORTH

Hearing my words, and the clean beeches
clap

Their scattered leaves ; attentive turns the
birch,

High-bred and delicate, and right happy
nod

The water-loving alders. — Hear me, chicks !
Soon as the first flake flutters in the calm,
Caught like the thistledown in spider's web,
Get you abroad, and, as the white flowers
come,

Consign them to the use of beauty ; guide
And stay them through the grave and de-
cent day.

Hark ! we must have unguessed. devices
wrought ;

Far up and down the unbroken loveliness
Must run so wondrous waves and dimply
curves

Heaven shall reshape her clouds, and still
despair

To match your magic. Mischiefs, mark me
well !

Hood the prim steeple so the silly bell

PROSPERO OF THE NORTH

Shall wag without a sound ; pad soft the
rock,

Stuff every hollow, cushion every knoll,
Ay, drape all nakedness to the utmost stretch
Of antic fancy, — bush and shrub and bough
And stump and stub and pole ; on fence and
wall

Bring to the task most exquisite caprice ;
So fair confusion let wild beauty work
No man will know his own. Away ! Away !

“NOW WINTER NIGHTS ENLARGE ”

THE moon is up, the stars are out,
The wind is in the naked tree ;
And up and down and all about
Pipes the winter minstrelsy.

Weird shapes whisk here and there,
Betwixt the boles and bushes brown ;
They skim along the ledges bare,
They dance the jaggy gulches down.

The moon is up, the stars are out,
Pipes on the winter minstrelsy ;
They wave at us, the ghostly rout,
Beck my merry mates and me.

Aha, and had they heart's desire ;
The phantom rabble — if they knew
The fling and crackle of the fire,
The sibilation of the brew !

OLD FRIENDS

WHEN window-panes are smeared,
And the hearth is spurting blue,
When the trees are black and weird,
And the hill owl calls "Who?" "Who?"
It's to good fellows would get up
For an old-time round of song and the cup.
Blow, blow, wind, blow
Across the snow;
Rattle casement, curtain wave!
A friend is no friend an he stays in his grave.

When iron is the rut,
And the wind wolves sniff and growl,
Tug the spigot from the butt,
And let the lean dogs howl.
Fill bellied pitchers to the snout
For friends to empty, turn about;
Set here and there
A comrade's chair;
Wet your throat, and set the stave!
A friend is no friend an he stays in his grave.

THE LITTLE WARM OWL

DARKNESS, grow and blacker fold,
Rattle, hail, and blast be bold.

 Old trees, blow together
 In the cold, roaring weather ;
Louder you howl
 The jollier he,
 In his nest in the breast of the hollow tree,
The warm little owl, the little warm owl.

Play up, wild pipes i' the forest bare,
Gallop, goblins, down the air.

 Ride, hug to the back
 Of the scudding rack ;
Fiercer it scowl
 The jollier he,
 In his nest in the breast of the hollow tree,
The warm little owl, the little warm owl.

THE WOLF OF THE EVENINGS

HARK, hark !

The thin wolves bark ;

They whim and whine

For the mild moonshine ;

They snarl at the hill-star caught in the
cloud,

They snap at the flapping wings of the dark.

Howl, howl !

The great gray owl,

His eyeballs blaze

Down the windy ways ;

With the sweep of the rack on your
leader crowd,

Rally, wolves, by the eyes of the owl !

COYOTE

A DIM lithe shape moves over the mesa,
Roves with the night wind up and down ;
The light-foot ghost, the wild dog of the
shadow,
Howls on the level beyond the town.
Cry, cry, Coyote !

No fellow has he, with leg or wing,
No mate has that spectre, in fur or
feather ;
In the sage bush is whelped a fuzzy thing,
And mischief itself helps lick him to-
gether.
Up, cub Coyote !

The winds come blowing over and over,
The great white moon is looking down ;
In the throat of the dog is devil's laughter.
Is he baying the moon or baying the town ?
Howl, howl, Coyote !

COYOTE

The shadow-dog on the windy mesa,
He sits, and he laughs in his devil's way.
Look to the roost and lock up the lambkin;
A deal may happen 'twixt now and the
day.
Ha, ha, Coyote !

POET AND CROW

POET

FOR once, old ebon buccaneer,
A bit of panegyric hear.
A few yet walk the earth
Who know your place and worth.
We dare avow it was your croak
That first the mother silence broke,
And beardless Time stared round,
Astonished at the sound.
An elemental, cosmic hymn,
Close as the bark is to the limb,
None of the wild might trimmed away,
Native as sunlight to the day,
Your song, in valley and on hill,
Holds fast the hale, unchanging art
Of Nature, her unbroken will,
The secret of her sturdy heart.
That gride — indigenous, grim —
That rasp on horror's rim,
In one ear rings forever true ;
It thrills one bosom through and through, —

POET AND CROW

Nature's. To her you sing,
To her, to her you cling ;
Your whole demeanor is devotion, —
All that grave and stately motion,
That scorn of them that dare be bold
Against the ancient iron mould.
Courage from claw to beak,
You brace us, worn and weak ;
'T is marrow for the bones when forth
You sally 'gainst the braggart North,
Clinch with him as mixed foe with foe
The elements, long, long ago,
When slow toward form the crude earth
 curled,
And chaos woke, and was a world.
But you have, too, your gracious ways ;
Right well you love the buddy days,
The rondeaus that the robins sing,
The bluebird music, sweet with Spring.
Then joy it is to see
You on the dreamy tree,
Armored in darkness, in your throat
The potency of the olden note,
Great faith's own minstrelsy :

POET AND CROW

“ Let none despair, nor once forget ;
Lo, there is corn in Egypt yet ! ”
And when 't is summer in the land,
And all the rule is love's own hand,
Then in yon speary field of mine
Courtly you swagger, stride, and shine,
Liege lord, by immemorial right,
Throughout the kingdom of God's light.

CROW

I 'm a prince of the air,
One scarcely made to scare
At the like of man or his image ;
I 'm Crow, old Crow, stiff up for a scrim-
mage :
And it's out in the morn,
When the dew is on the corn,
For to fill my maw —
Caw, caw, caw !

You are you, I am Crow,
A thing or two I know :
I sniff the trigger and the barrel,
Then off I flop, I flop and I carol, —

POET AND CROW

And it's out in the morn,
When the dew is on the corn,
For to fill my maw —
Caw, caw, caw !

I am Crow, you are you,
I know a thing or two ;
A man may be of straw,
But crow is tough stuff from beak to claw ;
And it's out in the morn,
When the dew is on the corn,
For to fill my maw —
Caw, caw, caw !

I was born on the hill,
And have always had my will ;
I am grit and gristle and brain,
My every feather is dyed in the grain :
And it's out in the morn,
When the dew is on the corn,
For to fill my maw —
Caw, caw, caw !

THE LOON

WAS never thing,
With leg or wing,
That could my ditty croon;
 By mine emerald head,
 By mine eye-ball red,
There's devil in the egg of the loon.

To myself I mutter;
The pale leaves flutter,
The lake lifts not a wave;
 I laugh! — a blast
 Like the trump at last,
When the men-things jump from the grave.

Ha, ha! Ho, ho!
The black winds know;
The sun is blown to a blot.
 The storm winds meet,
 They blacken and beat;
The shore and the sky are not.

THE LOON

Ha, ha! Ho, ho!

The winds play so

With the Lord of the Lake alone.

The raving rout,

They shriek and shout ;

The demon's laugh is mine own.

The wild winds rake,

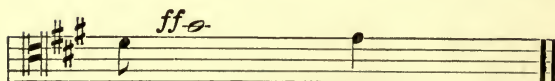
They pile the lake ;

Ha, ha! His brain is chaff,

The mad-cap loon,

They hatch i' the moon —

Ha, ha! I laugh and I laugh.



TOAD

I'm just about the color of mud,
I've a bobby mouth and a knobby back ;
I bundle away, I tumble and thud,
I lack the knack of walking a crack.

I sit and think at the chink of my hole —
Nothing like flies for a plump, buff
belly —

I rather reckon I have n't any soul,
Though I'm not altogether pebbles and
jelly.

As soon as the roses I smell the rain,
I wink one eye when two would n't do ;
I pad my ribs, and I don't complain.
I'm toad, but no toady — How about
you ?

TO TREE-CRICKETS

CONSTANT mites that briskly whip
One measure over and over,
How like you are, a-harping there,
The larger sort of lover.

Scratch-scratch, scratch-scratch, all the night,
You twang it, brave and cheery ;
One jerky stave, the whole night long, —
Deary — Deary — Deary.

High the moon rides, high and clear,
The filling dewdrops glisten ;
Thrum, plucky lovers ! well I know
Your little ladies listen.

Stick to 't, wooers ! So will I,
Nor ever slightest vary
The one sweet word of all the world, —
Mary — Mary — Mary.

QUATRAINS AND SONNETS

MY SONG

*MY song, you need be neither long nor loud,
If only love and beauty's own you are ;
It is the one breath curls the leaf and cloud,
The one life lights the daisy and the star.*

PROSE FOR WOES

MARRY, sirs, here 's merry greeting !
Who hath woes, let him put 'em in prose ;
Song was born and bred a sweeting,
On her lips a tune, at her throat a rose.

THE POET

I

A PRIEST of Heaven, some gracious hour,
Lowered to him chasuble and stole ;
He sings a weed — it is a flower ;
He sings a star — it is a soul.

II

He knows her voice, he heeds her call,
And Beauty holds him to her mother's-
heart ;
There lavishes — last gift of all —
The secrecies of speech, eternal art.

III

The poet marvels, while he sings,
At strangest bright eternal things.
The accent is not all his own ;
Betimes the god sings on alone.

MEMORY

I

WOULD you Love's fairest daughter see,
Look on her, yonder, — Memory,
Leaning in thought-emmarbled grace,
With dream-lit, half-averted face.

II

Stillter than where that city lies asleep,
 With fabled spires deep in the swinging
 sea,
Stillter and dimmer than that windless deep
 The sad-flowered shadow-field of mem-
 ory.

LOST JOY

LOST Joy, who now is at your side
From morning until eventide ;
Who has you softly by the hand,
All up and down the summer land ?

THE LOITERING JOYS

NIGHT strengthens star by star,
And tint by tint the day ;
The dearer blisses are
The longest on the way.

HERE AND HEREAFTER

A voice oft speaks, and saith,
"Shall sorrow leave thee at the gate of
death?
Heaven's stars illumine earth's night;
Why not earth-shadows dim the Hills of
Light?"

BUT ONCE

Two, from the Heights of Quiet,
Come, one day, to men;
Two, Love and Death, come hither
Once, and not again.

TO THE DREGS

Love's lips or the betrayer's kiss,
Drink, nor despair ;
The fates mix neither bane nor bliss
Too great to bear.

FATE

A SUNBEAM kissed a river-ripple,—"Aye
Shall live the love 'twixt thee and me!"
In night's wide darkness passed the light
away,
The river mingled with the sea.

THE WIND VOICE

“STEP softly ; where your foot is was a
flower.

Perhaps upon June's dearest grave you
tread.”

It follows me, haunts every autumn hour,
The wind voice talking of the blossom
dead.

SLAIN

WAR met him, and fell pestilence,
Sore toil and want, all the dread foes of
every day ;
These he struck down, then went he hence,
Sent by a soft cat-thing that clawed him
in her play.

THE VICTOR

✓
ALONG all ways the path of triumph lies ;
All places own the victor's art, —
To do that greater thing than win the
prize,
Lose it, unhurt in hope, in heart.

NOW

THINE hour is now ; ay, though the Hand
Have kingdoms yet in store,
He that to-day is king will stand
As if there were no more.

THE ANGEL STANDING BY

REVERE thy roof; life has no more
To give than now is at the door.
Where looks the clear, home-keeping eye,
There is the angel standing by.

WOULDST HEAR THE SINGING OF THE SPHERES

WOULDST hear the singing of the spheres,
Hark with closed ears;
Wouldst follow Beauty to her skies,
Look with closed eyes.

THE OLD

MUST be God's warders hearken every sigh,
Draw close and lovingly around the old ;
The glories on the going summer lie,
On the spent sun attend the hosts in
gold.

THUS RUN THE HOURS

THUS run the hours : blithe calls at break
of day,
A sighing when the light has passed away ;
The dawn, the noon, then gloom upon the
gold,
Music fallen mute, or moaning, youth
grown old.

OUR TWO GIFTS

Two gifts God giveth, and He saith,
One shall be forfeit in the strife,
The one no longer needed, — life ;
No hand shall take the other, — death.

TEARS

THE lips are pallid, parched with woes ?
Weep ! the fall of tears is not in vain ;
In the grass is laughter after rain,
The blush is back upon the rose.

TRUST

I

WELCOME the shadows ; where they blackest
are

Burns through the bright supernal hour ;
From blindness of wide dark looks out the
star,

From all death's night the April flower.

II

For beauty and for gladness of the days
Bring but the meed of trust ;
The April grass looks up from barren ways,
The daisy from the dust.

III

When of this flurry thou shalt have thy fill,
The thing thou seekest, it will seek thee
then :

The heavens repeat themselves in waters still
And in the faces of contented men.

WISDOM

To wisdom grief is sweet as mirth,
And toil is one with rest ;
The death groan is the cry of birth,
The grave the mother-breast.

DEATH

FEAREST the shadow? Keep thy trust ;
Still the star-worlds roll.
Fearest death ? sayest, "Dust to dust ?"
No ; say, "Soul to soul !"

THE FIRST DAWN

HE that engenders had called forth the
world;

The mist, ingathered from the vast of
space,

Together drawn, had fashioned a great face
Of vale and mountain, tree, and river curled.
Of all the leaves and flowers was none un-
furled,

No bird had song, no voice the giant race
Of beasts ; for darkness held her ancient
place,

The day-god's bolt glowed in his hand, un-
hurled.

But eastward, now, dream-colors, faint and
far,

Foretold to those first lives the end of
night,

And from black silence all leapt up as
one ;

THE FIRST DAWN

The mother-dark, with neither moon nor
star,

Was thick with wild eyes looking for the
light,

And throats of thunder for the com-
ing sun.

THE DEATH OF ADAM

'T WAS Adam at the gates of Paradise ;
Sick with the world's first sickness, prostrate, pale,
Low lay he, in his pain. And they made wail
That stood by him : " O father, dim your eyes
And filmed ; they cannot see the dreadful skies.
Across the heavens black cloud-wings reach and sail,
And prowling shadow crouches in the vale.
What burden, father, on the hurt earth lies? "
" I hunger, wife and children, for the bough
Whereof I ate. Go thou, swift-footed Seth,
And pluck from that sweet tree." —
With eyes mist-dim

THE DEATH OF ADAM

He looked on it. “Nay, wife, nay, children,
now

Is here the one He spake of to me, —
Death ;

With hollow voice he bids me follow
him.”

THE PASSING OF THE QUEEN

(JANUARY 22, 1901)

ANSWER the cabin and the hunting-shed
The voice of mourning in the royal halls ;
The shadow crawls upon the crownèd head,
From out her palsied hand the sceptre
falls.

So. Wrap her in the banner from her walls,
And in her regal peace be comforted.

Hark ! up and down the earth gray honor
calls,
And the long glories gather round her bed.
Through all the years her people have been
fed,

Yea, the wild ox has fatted in her stalls ;
To islands of the sea her lines have spread,
Proud sons of song have sung her mad-
rigals.

Come, while the growing pageants past her
sweep,
Wrap round the banner-fold, and let her
sleep.

MY BOOKS

My books, you have made light the heavy
time,

Have made me whole with strong, restor-
ing thought ;

By you I have been heartened and been
taught

In noble prose, in high immortal rime.

You are mine oaken staff when I would
climb,

Mine armor when the battle must be
fought ;

To you I owe the best that I have
wrought,

Life's jarring bells lost in the larger chime.

In loneliness what faithful company !

In social hours, of comrades all the best,

Champions of hope and cheer, of right
and truth.

Be closer yet along the way to be ;

The farther that I journey toward the west

The oftener tent me by the wells of
youth.

THE VOICE OF THE MOUNTAIN

Low at my feet is stretched the lordly vale ;
Across my realm the high wild stars are
led ;

My garment is the light, the darkness
dread ;

I wrap me round with rain and snow and hail.
Round me and round the eagles nest and sail ;
Between my knees the thunders make
their bed ;

I lap the storm-winds, and their young
are bred,

Their young that play, and chafe my rocky
mail.

Who cometh up to me, he shall have power,
The prophet's power, the old law-giver's
might ;

Ay, he shall have the tablet in his hand.

He shall not fail, but in the evil hour
And good, uplifted, clothed upon with
light,

His neck unbowed, as I stand shall he
stand.

GROWN OLD WITH NATURE

IF yonder lie another, better land,
A fairer than this humble mother-shore,
Hoping to meet the dear ones gone before,
I fain would go. But may no angel hand
Lead on so far along the shining sand,
So wide within the everlasting door,
All lost will be this good green world.

No more

Of Earth! Let me not hear that dread
command.

Then must I mourn, unsoothed by harps
of gold,

Mourn for the boughs, the birds, which
taught me song,

Mourn for the nightfall on the forest fold ;

Yea, must bemoan, amid the joyous
throng,

The early loves. The heart that has grown
old

With Nature cannot, happy, leave her
long.

TWO FRIENDS

I HONOR him who needs must chop the stone,
Must pluck the root up, murder beast and
bird,

Then label with a very butcher's word
The bleeding pieces. Though he build his
throne

On brittle stalks and hollow carcass-bone,
Still by a princely purpose is he stirred ;
And such his thirst for knowledge long
deferred,

Kind Nature counts him in among her own.

But him I love the Muses make their
care,

Leading his feet wherever he may go,
To spell the gentle magic of the air,
Of olden boughs and darkest brooks that
flow.

He has my heart ; for perfect things and
fair

He finds, and leaves them fairer than they
grow.

I WOULD N'T

A SPRIG of mint by the wayward brook,
A nibble of birch in the wood,
A summer day and love and a book,
And I would n't be king if I could.

THE SKILFUL LISTENER

WHO listens well hears Nature on her round,
When least she thinks it; bird and bough
and stream
Not only, but her silences profound,
Surprised by nicer cunning of his dream.

TWO VOICES

THE winds at play on a breezy day,
Sweet, sweet to hear what they sing and say;
But sweeter the murmur of winds that blow
When only the heart and the high leaves
know.

MY FANCIES

THE winds are faint; the leaves, not sure
they blow,
Fall slumbering as they flutter to and fro.
So, drowsy fancies, out of dream you start,
To fall asleep again upon my heart.

SPRING

I

THE pussy-willow and the hazel know,
The bluebird and the robin, what rings
true ;
I trust to such, and let the whiners go.
Bravo ! bluff March ; I swing my hat to
you.

II

Bring, bluebird, from the blue above
The song Love's heavenly own ;
See ! hand in hand, come Spring and Love —
Or is it Love alone ?

EARLY MORNING

A WEBBY mead with diamonds set,
Dim, drowsy boughs, dream-burdened yet,
A mist-flock half-way up the steep,
Curled there, rock-folded, still asleep.

THE SOUTH WIND

HERALD of blissful summertide come I ;
I wander by,
Singing of sweetest things the June day
 knows, —
Love and the rose.

THE HERMIT-THRUSH

HOLY, Holy ! — In the hush
Hearken to the hermit-thrush ;
All the air
Is in prayer.

TWILIGHT

THE glories falter on the mountain crown,
The smooth blue heavens let their quiet
 down,
The little wondering lights no longer leap,
And, leaf on leaf, the cool trees droop in
 sleep.

HAUNTING MY DREAMS

THERE be two things that haunt my dreams :
the flower

Swinging on rocky hilltops all alone,
The minstrelsy of silence at the hour
When the last bird has to her hiding
flown.

THE PASSING OF AUTUMN

I

Slow trembles from her envied crown
A red leaf down ;
And the smile dies
Into the darkness of her eyes.

II

The hurt hours droop and hover,
 Passing the hallowed place ;
The pale moon leans above her,
 Weeps down upon her face.

III

The swamp-tree sighs, and the thin sharp
 reed,
The wire-grass whines, and the stiff brown
 weed,
The lone hill-mullein stands dumb and
 tall,
The low clouds hover, the long rains fall.

THE PASSING OF AUTUMN

IV

The brook, slow northward toward the
 snows,
Bubbling its little trouble, goes ;
Lorn branches beckon, strained in space ;
Death-pale the field's beseeching face.

V

A wind, whence no man knows,
Through the grating weeds it blows ;
It comes, it sighs and goes.
Once it rocked the summer rose.

THE TREES

MEN hope and labor and despair,
 Laughter they have and sorrow ;
The trees their gods' composure wear
 To-morrow and to-morrow.

THE VOICE OF THE WIND

MY breath is on the mountain pine,
 My murmur on the sea ;
The burden haunts that heart of thine, —
 Love and eternity.

THE VOICE OF THE GRASS

I

ERE roves the bee or cometh forth the
 flower,
Ere on the tree the south wind bloweth
 power,
The naked place I crown; I edge the
 stream;
Into love's face I look, and feed her dream.

II

My lot with man is cast.
 I round him shine and wave,
Nor fail him at the last:
 I lie upon his grave.

EARLIER AND LIGHTER
VERSES

THE WAY OF IT

THE wind is awake, pretty leaves, pretty
leaves,

Heed not what he says ; he deceives, he
deceives :

Over and over

To the lowly clover

He has lisped the same love (and forgotten
it, too)

He will soon be lisping and pledging to
you.

The boy is abroad, pretty maid, pretty maid,
Beware his soft words ; I 'm afraid, I 'm
afraid :

He has said them before

Times many a score,

Ay, he died for a dozen ere his beard pricked
through,

And the very same death he will die for you.

THE WAY OF IT

The way of the boy is the way of the wind,
As light as the leaves is dainty maid-kind ;
 One to deceive,
 And one to believe —
That is the way of it, year to year ;
But I know you will learn it too late, my
 dear.

TO YOUNGSTERS

GOLDEN hair and eyes of blue,
What won't they do, what won't they do?
The gaitered foot, the taper waist —
Be not in haste, be not in haste;
Before your chin grows twenty spear,
My word for 't, youngster, they 'll appear.

Raven hair and eyes of night
Undo the boys (it serves 'em right);
The drooping curl, the downward glance,
They are only waiting for the chance;
They have not failed this thousand year,
Right in the nick, lad, they 'll appear.

Shapely hands and arms of snow,
There's nothing like them here below;
The cheeks that blush, the lips that smile —
A little while, a little while —
Tease out the sprout, sir, never fear,
Before you know it they 'll be here.

TO YOUNGSTERS

Hands, and hair, and lips, and eyes,
In these the tyro's danger lies ;
A touch, a tress, a glance, a sigh,
And then, my boy, good-by — good-by !
God help you, youngster ! keep good cheer ;
Coax on your chin to twenty spear.

“SWEET-THING” JANE

WHEN somebody comes a-tripping down,
The winds all at play with her hair and
gown ;

The very same winds that are just too lazy
To lift a leaf or to swing a daisy, —
Then hold your heart with might and main ;
She is crossing the meadow, “ Sweet-thing ”
Jane.

She always chooses the cool of the day,
The way down to Lovetown, that ’s her way ;
She knows very well (what is well worth
knowing)

There ’s only one road — the road she is
going ;

And she knows she is sweet as a rose in the
rain,

And she knows — she will tell you, “ Sweet-
thing ” Jane.

“SWEET-THING” JANE

A light will burn in the blue of her eye,
Like the star lit first in the evening sky ;
And over her lips will bubble the laughter
The brooks in the sun go running after ;
You will see, you will hear, at the gate in
the lane,
While slowly it opens to “Sweet-thing”
Jane.

You will open it wide, then what will you
do?
Why, you will be off for Lovetown, too ;
The cool of the day is your lovers’ weather,
And all go to Lovetown two together.
You may hold your heart with might and
main,
She will have it at last, will “Sweet-thing”
Jane.

WHAT I WOULD

I would have a poet's book,
In a shady summer nook,
Where I could around me look,
 As a lover may ;
I would have a little hand
In my own ; would hold it, and —
Hold it, and — you understand.
 That would be my way,
 All a summer's day.

I would read a fervent page,
Then explain, a very sage,
All about the poet's rage,
 As a lover may ;
A modest charge were meet for this, —
Just the brief rubific bliss
Of a not-quite-willing kiss.
 That would be my way,
 All a summer's day.

COME ALONG, DEARY

HILL to vale, with measures gay,
Singing the green upon the gray,
Sweet and kind, sweet and kind,
Singing and kissing goes the wind.

Singing to me and singing to you ;
Come along, Deary ! What others do
Never mind, never mind ;
Singing and kissing goes the wind.

MY CASTLE IN THE AIR

OR in the East or in the West,
Where shall I build my bird a nest?
Northward or southward, whither roam
To build my little love a home?

Up yonder, in the clean, sweet air,
I think that I could keep her, there,
Too much an angel for the ground,
For heaven somewhat too warm and round.



LITTLE LOVE FORGETTETH HIS UMBRELLA

(ANACREON)

LOVE came, one night, his wings all wet,
And put his face against the pane,
And shook his ringlets in the rain;
When soon I heard the sweetest noise,
Made 'twixt the wind, his wings and voice;
I heard it, and I hear it yet.

What could I do but ope the door,
And take him softly from the storm,
And rub his rosy body warm,
And hang to dry the slackened bow
And silver arrows, dripping so,
And make him happy as before?

I wist not what he was about :
He took an arrow dry and clean,
And said, "'T will fly right well, I ween."
Now, here it is, the very dart,
The barbs well fastened in my heart,
Only the feathers sticking out.

AUTO-DA-FÉ

(To C. W. F.)

HEIGH-HO, a drowsy, drippy day
Suits well your single gentlemen
Whose locks begin to show the gray.
The grizzly drizzle round my "den,"
'T is sent on purpose, I dare say,
For bachelor's auto-da-fé.
I have the ribboned missives here,
The hearth flames flicker low, but clear,
The spell is on, — the savage spell
To do the burning quickly, well ;
So, to it.

Heavens ! how old am I ?
It seems a hundred year since she
That inked this paper said to me,
" You will be older by and by,
I was a beardless rover then,
The Callow Knight of the Daring Pen,
A-tilting in the lists of air
For every damsel counted fair.

AUTO-DA-FÉ

Constance, your knight is older, now ;
And you ? The dusk will dull the bough
Was brightest with the morning gold.
As time's own hand let mine be bold, —
Spring up, brave little tongues of fire ;
Here I begin the precious pyre.

These ? These from merry Margaret.
I never loved her, never ; yet
There was a something us between
That keeps a spear of memory green, —
A plucky, strong, unbrothered blade,
Still smiling in its depth of shade.
Well-turned the hand that down this page
Drew line to line, each letter clear
And firm from " Jolly John, my dear,"
Far as the awkward word " engage."
" Engage," " engage " ! Did I propose ?
Here 't is again, right at the close.
Plump Margaret, if this be true,
In those young days what did n't I do ?
For shame ! — Up, up, good flames ! To
you
I toss this costly treasure, too.

AUTO-DA-FÉ

There's nothing like a rainy day
When one would put old loves away.

Ha, this trig bundle, what an air
Of pride about it! And the care
To make a fellow bite the dust:

“Down on your knee, you must, you
must!”

And probably I did go down,
(General prostration seized the town,)
In fact, I know I did; but then,
Somehow I found my feet again.
A girl's a girl, a boy's a fool,
And life, it proves a sorry school. —
Proud queen, cloud-born, serene and high,
To bow low down is not to die;
Long I survive all injury
To aching heart or quaking knee.
But mark! a chance word, here and there,
Says yet you could a little “care.”
Imperial Lois, 't is too late. —
These from Her Highness, gentle grate.

And, now, to Helen. Taste of wine
Is on my lips, the sting of spices;

AUTO-DA-FÉ

This dark-eyed marvel was divine,
Even in mundanity's devices.
She traced these pages sharp and fast
As hailstones drive on the winter blast ;
Tame passion Helen never knew ;
A very hurricane she blew,
Or sat in midst of awful calm.
No other ever sang a psalm
As she could sing it, on occasion ;
And hers alone the eyes could play
Such antics after the operation.
Charmer half-wild in heart and mind,
Angel with a dash of the tiger kind,
Love's leopard, — Helen, off and on,
We loved it madly, years ago.
When you were married — Blaze, bright
 pyre !
I add these also, fire to fire.

And still the rain, the gray, gray rain !
Old Rover's nose is at the pane. —
Rover, you wag your tail in vain ;
Not any roving on the day —
The day we put old loves away. —

AUTO-DA-FÉ

'T is almost done ; one offering more.

What says the clock ? Quarter of four. —

Here's for you, fellow ; foul or fair,

Rover, 't is time we took the air. —

These last, these little yellow scraps,

Good fire, ere long, perhaps — perhaps.

LOVE'S IN TOWN

COLOR in the lilacs,
And singing in the air ;
Sweet is for the having,
Plenty and to spare.

Fuzzy are the bushes,
The fields are all a-smile ;
Phyllis has a feeling
Life is well worth while ;

Dian tests her dimples,
Griselda fetches sighs ;
Amaryllis loosens
The lightnings in her eyes ;

Roxy knots her ribbons,
Belinda binds her zone ; —
Pluck your heart up, Colin !
Philander, hold your own !

Tell it up and down,
Love's in town !

SONG OF THE COUNTRY LASS

A LASS am I, and I wait my day ;
To some 't will be nay, but to one 't will
be yea ;

When the time comes, I shall know what
to say.

The winter goes, and the warm wind blows,
And who shall keep the color from the
red, red rose ?

The blossom blue and the blossom pink,
The bee may love both, but I know what I
think :

One he loves best, and there will he drink.

There is bloom for the bee, there is dew
for the grass,

And the cup is not empty for a country
lass.

A lass am I, neither high nor low ;
My heart is mine now, but I 'd have the
world know,

When the wind 's right, away it will go.

SONG OF THE COUNTRY LASS

The brook sings below, and the bird
sings above,

And sweeter in between sings the lover to
his love.

LOVE'S WORLD

If the year be at her Spring
I neither know nor care ;
I have the bird-song of your speech,
The warm rain of your hair.
I question not if thrushes sing,
If roses load the air ;
Beyond my heart I need not reach
When all is summer there.

I go not by the blue above,
By grasses green or sere ;
Your silences, your sigh, your smile,
They mark my time o' year.
Its own brave wonder-world has love ;
So fair it is, I fear
Sometimes 't will fade and go the while
I look upon you, dear.

LIFE AND I

As the shadows glide
Over the wheat on the ripe hillside,
So we journey, Life and I :
O sweet youth-time, go not by !

Where the warm winds meet,
To the wreathèd pipe we time our feet ;
There we linger, Life and I :
O sweet youth-time, go not by !

Where the grasses play,
Ever we wander away and away,
Singing, laughing, Life and I :
O sweet youth-time, go not by !

AT CANDLE-LIGHTING

I THINK it better to believe,
And be even as the children, they
The children of the early day,
Who let the kindly dream deceive,
And joyed in all the mind may weave
Of dear conceit — better, I say,
To let wild fancy have her way,
To trust her than to know and grieve.
A poet of old Colophon
A notion held I think was right,
No matter how or whence he gat it :
*The stars are snuffed out every dawn,
And newly lighted every night.*
I hope to catch the angels at it.

THE OPEN HEART

Would you understand
The language with no word,
The speech of brook and bird,
Of waves along the sand?

Would you make your own
The meaning of the leaves,
The song the silence weaves
Where little winds made moan?

Would you know how sweet
The falling of the rill,
The calling on the hill,—
All tunes the days repeat?

Neither alms nor art,
No toil, can help you hear;
The secret of the ear
Is in the open heart.

SUMMER RAIN

DROPS of summer rain
Tapping at the pane,
Welcome, little hearts of air,
Beating, beating, beating there.

Haply I know why
Raindrops quit the sky :
Every lily, every rose
Well that gentle knocking knows.

Rose and lily-cup
Fill it, fill it up ;
Only lovers from the sky
On the breasts of blossoms lie.

SONG OF THE SUMMER HOURS

WE happy hearts for nothing are
If not for ringing praises ;
A song for Summer, near and far,
From hilltop down to daisies !

We wind her hair with leaves and flowers,
In places green and shady ;
We are the happy summer hours,
And Summer is our Lady.

Come, sing with us ! the while we run
Is Summer going, going.
Some say she loves the roving sun ;
There is no knowing, knowing.

THE COMING OF THE ROSES

ON the south winds a flurry ;
The slow clouds hurry,
The blue looks knowing.
There is coming and going
Of voices and wings and feet ;
There is bringing and mixing of sweet,
Of tenderest hues
The deft hours use ;
There is peering of happy faces
From secret, shadowy places.
The flutters of June
Blow a blissful tune ;
On the leaves but the gleam
And the tremble of dream ;
The gate of the sun-god closes.
But, all alone, will Love toil on,
Labor she will till the dark be gone ;
And to-morrow there 'll be roses.

THE MUSIC OF NATURE

THE song of Nature is forever,
Her joyous voices falter never ;
On hill and valley, near and far,
Attendant her musicians are.

From waterbrook or forest tree
For aye comes gentle melody ;
The very air is music blent,
A universal instrument.

When hushed are bird and brook and wind,
Then silence will some measure find,
Still sweeter ; as a memory
Is sweeter than the things that be.

FOR THE MAKING OF MUSIC

TAKE of the maiden's, of the mother's sigh,
Of childhood's dream, the hope and peace
that bless

Old age; take of the lover's kiss, caress,
Of light it kindles in the loved-one's eye;
Of June's long shadows, Autumn's evening
sky,

Of roses, of the south wind's tenderness,
Of stars that burn through pine-tops,
sprays that tress

The willow-banks where brooks run stillest
by;

Take of the blissful lisping of young
Spring,

Take of the last faint, pleading grief of Fall,
Of joy and woe that sleep and waking
bring, —

The costliest offerings of the great, the small;
Now, pour into the empty soul each thing,
And let the Finger touch that moveth all.

OVER THE HILL

WHERE wild flowers were and rippling grass,
I chanced upon a country lass ;
“ Was never lovelier home,” I said.
She hung her head, blushed very red,
Then raised her eyes, as maidens will, —
“ My heart, my heart lives over the hill.”

So fair she was, and so afraid,
I could not quiz the little maid ;
So over hilltop must I ride
To see what could be on the other side.
Her words went, too, as sweet words will, —
“ My heart, my heart lives over the hill.”

I crossed the hill, looked everywhere,
And asked if a little red heart lived there.
I was sure it did, so I rode along
Till I heard the burden of a song ;
Sang the lad o’ the mill, as lads they will, —
“ My heart, my heart lives over the hill.”

OVER THE HILL

The little lass and the miller boy,
The meed of the years, the grief, the joy,
They told it all, that summer day ;
However run the hours away,
Bring fortune good or bring it ill,
Heart and hope live over the hill.

AT THE HEARTH-SIDE

THE children tucked away,
His hearthside bright and still,
The farmer's frowns are all that say
The day has brought him ill.

The wife — her work is done —
Moves cheerly here and there ;
The comforts gather, one by one,
Around the easy chair.

Now, as a sunny brook
Will woo the moody shore,
She nears the gloomy chimney nook ;
She hardly ventures more.

If he but lift his face —
The hearth-flames quicken, spring ;
A yielding smile, his old embrace,
And wife and kettle sing.

THE KITCHEN CLOCK

KNITTING is the maid o' the kitchen, Milly,
Doing nothing, sits the chore-boy, Billy :
“ Seconds reckoned,
Seconds reckoned,
Every minute,
Sixty in it ;
Milly, Billy,
Billy, Milly,
Tick-tock, tock-tick,
Nick-knock, knock-nick,
Knockety-nick, nickety-knock,” —
Goes the kitchen clock.

Closer to the fire is rosy Milly,
Every whit as close and cozy, Billy :
“ Time is flying,
Worth your trying ;
Pretty Milly,
Kiss her, Billy !
Milly, Billy,
Billy, Milly,

THE KITCHEN CLOCK

Tick-tock, tock-tick,
Now — now, quick — quick !
Knockety-nick, nickety-knock,” —
Goes the kitchen clock.

Something ’s happened, very red is Milly,
Billy boy is looking very silly :

“ Pretty misses,
Plenty kisses ;
Make it twenty,
Take a plenty ;
Billy, Milly,
Milly, Billy,
Right-left, left-right,
That ’s right, all right,
Knockety-nick, nickety-knock,” —
Goes the kitchen clock.

Weeks gone, still they are sitting, Milly,
Billy ;

O, the winter winds are wondrous chilly !

“ Winter weather,
Close together ;
Would n’t tarry,
Better marry ;

THE KITCHEN CLOCK

Milly, Billy,
Billy, Milly,
Two, one — one, two,
Don't wait, 't won't do,
Knockety-nick, nickety-knock," —
Goes the kitchen clock.

Winters two have gone, and where is Milly?
Spring has come again, and where is Billy?
" Give me credit,
For I did it ;
Treat me kindly,
Mind you wind me ;
Mister Billy,
Mistress Milly,
My — O, O — my,
By-by, by-by,
Nickety-knock, cradle rock," —
Goes the kitchen clock.

THE TRAPPER'S SWEETHEART

WIDE awake, now, mind your eye,
She will think on 't by and by ;
She will see — perhaps — she may,
'Gin to-morrer, not to-day.

“ Be true to me,
Furgit,” says she,
Jest as it may hit her fancy :
That 's it zackly, that is Nancy.

Take a squirrel up a tree,
Jest so frisky, sir, is she :
Now on this side, now on that,
You must watch her like a cat.

It 's “ No,” it 's “ Yes,
I rather guess,” —
Jest as it may tech her fancy :
That 's it zackly, that is Nancy.

You 've seen creeturs sudding lame,
Git too near 'em, an' — they 're game !

THE TRAPPER'S SWEETHEART

Her right over : an inch too near,
Up and off is Nancy dear.

“ Yes, Jake,” says she,
“ Laws sake ! ” says she,
Jest accordin’ to her fancy :
That’s it zackly, that is Nancy.

Whew ! a gal’s a cunnin’ thing ;
You must take ’em on the wing. —
I’ll be goin’ ; fur, ye see,
Nancy, she’s expectin’ me.

I’ll hit or miss her,
It’s quit or kiss her ;
I’m fur facts, while she’s fur fancy :
That’s us *zackly* — me and Nancy.

A SAINT OF YORE

(IN MEMORIAM E. V.)

Who brings it, now, her sweet accord
To every precept of her Lord ?
In quaintly fashioned bonnet
With simplest ribbons on it,
The older folk remember well
How prompt she was at Sabbath bell.

I see her yet ; her decent shawl,
Her sober gown, silk mitts, and all.
The deacons courtly meet her,
The pastor turns to greet her,
And maid and matron quit their place
To find her fan or smooth her lace.

I see her yet, with saintly smile,
Pass slowly up the quiet aisle ;
Her mien, her every motion,
Is melody, devotion ;

A SAINT OF YORE

Contagious grace spreads round her way,
The prayer that words can never pray.

Old Groveland Church ! the good folk fill
It yet, up on the windy hill ;
The grass is round it growing
For nearest neighbors' mowing ;
The weathered, battered sheds, behind,
Still rattle, rattle, with the wind.

All is the same ; but in yon ground
Have thickened fast the slab and mound.
Hark ! Shall I join the praises ?
Rather, among the daisies,
Let me, in peaceful thought, once more
Be silent with the saint of yore.

GRAN'THER

“WHO ’s killed, to-day ?”

He asks, in his ancient way ;

“ And what have they stolen, this time, my
lad ?

Bad business, my boy, right bad, right bad ! ”

The pipe — mark it slide

To the other side —

How he puffs it, and whews,

Keeping up with the news !

A character !

When he opens, — “ I tell ye, sir,

There ’s nothing like knowing cheese from
chalk,”

Make ready for none of your modern talk ;

Run the text as it may,

He has something to say,

Be you never so clever,

Will squelch you forever.

GRAN'THER

A grand old man,
Built after the olden plan !
“ Nonsense,” he says ; “ no trouble so tough
But good backbone is doctor enough ; ”
 He 's the heart of the farm,
 Still its strong right arm.
How he smiles, how he smokes,
'Twixt the sermons and jokes !

THE OLD FARM BARN

THE maples look down with bright eyes in
their leaves,
The clear drops drip from the swallow-built
eaves,
The pond is all dimples from shore to
shore,
And the miller smiles back from his place
in the door.

Slow mist from the mountain comes drifting
down,
The houses show fainter afar in the town,
The gust sweeps up, dies away again,
Then loud and fast the rap-tap of the rain.

Old Nancy looks soberly out from her stall,
The drowsy cows — do they chew at all?
The old farm barn is so dusk and still
The spiders sleep on the window-sill.

THE GOOD OLD TIME

A GRAY old orchard, scarred as by battle,
A row of poplars gaunt and hoar,
Dandelions, lilacs, and no-name roses,
And the pewee over the door ;

Stanch weeds, stiff grasses that challenge the
winter,
Wild cherries, red ripe on the wall,
The song of the birds in the hush of the
morning,
At evening, the low cattle-call ;

Savage paths a-bristle with burdock and
thistle,
Strong sun, and shadow as strong,
Quick brooks that learn the song of the
upland,
And sing it the still night long ;

The clover, the laughter, the chat in the
shadow,
The noon horn's lusty alarm,

THE GOOD OLD TIME

The halting mower, with a stroke at the
sweat-bee,

Slowly dropping his brown bare arm ; —

Come back to me ever, you long-faded
glories,

Bringing the bygone day ;

Weave in my dream the seasons together

In your own dear wayward way.

The march is forward, the past is in ashes,

On the wreck of the old is risen the new ;

But the boy in my heart with a shout still
follows

Where the mowers swing out in the dew.

COLLIE KELSO

(AN EPITAPH)

THE rhythmic beating of his tail,
As though two hearts took turn about,
One thump inside, and then one out,—
Like all things earthly, it must fail.
Pacific gesture, made to span
The gap 'twixt animal and man,
Death stopt it. One last waggle; so
Went Kelso where the good dogs go.

BROTHER BACHELOR BATRACHIAN

“ Wears yet a precious jewel in his head ”

Ho, hermit of the cellar wall,
If you are coming out at all,
Come now ; in thirty minutes more
The rain will trickle down your door.
Come, come ; hurrah, there, bachelor lump !
Betwixt a waddle and a jump,
Judge-like ascend your own toad-stool,
Worked out last night by wizard's tool.
Ha, there you are, sedate as ever ;
Prodigious plain, but passing clever.
The years are twenty to a day
Since you and I first sat this way ;
How many more think you to squat,
Contented, on our pleasant spot ?
Be frank with me, you wily monk,
Impervious, solemn, clumsy chunk !
What mischief are you plotting, now,
Squaring about sou'west by sou' ?

BROTHER BATRACHIAN

A weather-cock, with half the pains,
Can nose precise a dozen rains.
Be seated. Crony, it is cold
Way down there in your stony hold.
Those dungeon vapors — don't you think
They make the spirit sort of sink,
Partic'larly when stingy fate
Too long withholds the cheery mate?
Let go in peace that fiftieth fly;
Another morsel, and you die!
With your last testament unsigned,
How dare you gorge yourself stone-blind?
A risky situation that
When toads are twenty-odd and fat.
Feel nervous, fellow? Pshaw! lean back,
And from your buff aldermanic sack
Puff out the truth for once and all:
Your mind's made up to wed, this fall.
Your hand! one lone toad in the wall,
Is a wart heap, no toad at all.
There! don't repeat that deaconish wink;
I know exactly what you think.
Somebody (not far off) has had
His little frolics, good and bad,

BROTHER BATRACHIAN

His salad antics ; dare he vow
He is well over 'em ? How 's that — how ?
Warm evenings, just outside the walk,
Those cooings by the cabbage stalk !
Droll chap, I grant you are old and fat,
And may have nieces and all that ;
But when with *her* you claim relation,
Blood ties remotest in creation —
Monstrous ! Old chap, it would n't go down
Though backed by every toad in town.
Sit still, no offence ; I can't help joking,
The moment I see that stub-nose poking
Into the light. *You* take a mate —
Prepost'rous ! Certainly ; too late.
At your age, better a hangman's halter
Than the kind one is led with to the
altar.
Heaven spare the storm that we can't
weather,
We two old jovies, here together.
Heigh-ho, the gentle, misty rain
Is coming down the hill again.
Did you perceive just what was meant
'Bout that last will and testament ?

BROTHER BATRACHIAN

Grave Bachelor Batrachian, pray,
What sense in sidling off that way?
Ridiculous old rogue! Turn round;
You will soon enough be underground.
No other eyes see well as mine
How bright your inner riches shine;
Long may they live when you are dead:
Leave me the jewel in your head.

FRIEND OPHIDIAN

(TO JOHN MUIR, DISCOVERER OF THE "BASHFUL
RATTLESNAKE")

CYLINDRICAL thing
Without leg, without wing,
Glazed membrane stuffed with motion,
Give ear to a heretic's notion.
The fact that you crawl
Is no reason at all
For sitfast accusing
And head-pan bruising ;
A walk or a glide,
A stride or a slide,
A trip or a slip,
A skate or a skip, —
Any one of the eight, all the same to me,
Sly, india-rubber iniquity !
I can't get rid of an early suspicion
That we harp overhard on the point of
position.
I think, moreover, in your shabbiest deed,
You can give no points to Adam's seed.

FRIEND OPHIDIAN

We all have our lapses, among them as
serious

As those at your threshold, twister myste-
rious.

To travel way back to the start of the
world,

When in grasses of Eden your ancestor
curled,

Suppose in snakeskin a wretch did deceive
Dear, lily-lovely, much-visible Eve ;

In their own skins, to-day, that's just what
men do,

Then put the whole blame (and the bludg-
eon) on you.

Your forefathers, likely, were up to their
tricks,

But the fault, after all, was plainly Old
Nick's ;

And if only *your* paths are sinlessly slid,

We can well let slide what your grand-
daddy did.

Poor animate string with the glittering
eye,

At peace on the sunny hillock lie.

FRIEND OPHIDIAN

As for me and my house, we will never
inveigh

'Gainst a ribbon that harmlessly garters our
way,

Nor with cudgel from cactus or Calvin
hewed,

Fall thwacking its limber longitude.

Forgive us, friend Ophidian ;

Bask on in peace meridian.

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

“ ’T is the gods ;
 . . . the secret justice of the gods
 Is mingled with it.” — PHILASTER

PERSONS

MENELAUS, *King of Sparta*

HELEN, *his Queen*

PARIS, *Prince of Ilion*

ÆTHRA, *Serving-Woman to the Queen*

COURTIERS *of Sparta*

COURTIERS *of Ilion*

SCENE : SPARTA. PALACE OF MENELAUS

The *King* and *Queen* look from a Window

Helen

More hunters, come to boast and chase the
boar

With Menelaus, Sparta's hunter-king.

Menelaus

And Spartan Helen's husband.

Helen

Fame does not trump my lord as Helen's
husband ;

Yon comers honor Sparta's hunter-king.

Menelaus

Came they because I wear upon my breast
The pearl of all the seas — Nay, why so
pale ?

Helen

The frown is gone ; with it my silly fright.

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Menelaus

The leader is no Greek. Greeks walk the
ground,
While he my prince, there, trips it on the
wind.

Helen (to herself)

No Greek indeed ; and whose the flaming
wings ?
Is it the wand of Hermes ? Do I sleep ?

PALACE HALL

Menelaus and Courtiers. *Paris* and Courtiers

Paris

King Menelaus, we are of Ilion all,
Turned from our errand. Not with men it
lies,
But with the gods, to reach the wished-for
shore ;
Our baffled sails were set for Salamis.
To harbor us is kindness done to Thrace ;

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

The where, Poseidon and Apollo helping,
My grandsire builded, old Laomedon.

Menelaus

It is good Priam's son.
There's none but knows your white-haired
father well,
Knows Hector, too, Queen Hecabe's first-
born ;
And fortune now adds Paris. One and all,
Most welcome ! So. Upon the morrow,
friends,
We face the boar together.

Paris

Gladly we bide the wheeling of a sun ;
Longer we may not stay our urgent jour-
ney.
When Heracles laid low Laomedon,
He took for spoil his child, Hesione,
And gave her to his friend, Prince Telamon
Of Salamis. Prince Telamon now dead,
We, here, are sent to say to Salamis,
“ Priam would have Hesione at home.”

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Menelaus

'T is well. We feast to-night, friends, hunt
to-morrow.

Thereafter, at your pleasure, sail away,
Commissioned of two thrones : " Ilion and
Sparta

Demand of Salamis King Priam's sister."

BANQUET HALL

Menelaus leads in Helen

Menelaus

It were no banquet not set off with Helen.
Our ways are freer, Prince, than they may be
At Ilion. — Ere we fall to baser joys,
My Queen, welcome with me old Priam's
joy,

Prince Paris ; fated, on the hour he goes,
To take with him the captive heart of Sparta.

Æthra (to herself)

If my old eyes can see, it will be so ;
If my old hands can help, it shall be so.

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Paris

Most gracious lady, light of Lacedæmon,
In honest Sparta none may hide his thought.

Æthra (to herself)

Tush, Paris! Aphrodite's thought, not
yours.

Paris

To tell my thought I first must tell the tale
The thought was born of. 'T is about a lad,
A shepherd lad who watched my father's
flocks,

Feeding upon a slope of piny Ida.

To him Olympus sent, one summer day,
Three goddesses. Heaven had, 't would
seem, no god

Dare say which was the fairest of the three,
And it must ask the silly shepherd lad.

The Fair Ones found him by Scamander's
bank —

Scamander, yellow as his own wild locks,
Stained with the sunshine — where he sat,
and played

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

As blithe a pipe as ever lifted foot
Of fawn or forest nymph dancing to Pan.
The first to speak was she that sits by Zeus,
The Bride of Heaven : “ Shepherd, we hear
that you,

Taught of the lovely things you live among,
Wise Nature’s gentle confidant, can tell
Of beauteous things which is most beautiful.
Take you this apple, boy, and give it her
You find the fairest here.” “ Take it ” —
’t was now

The virgin against whose ivory side the lance
Of love is shattered — “ take it, boy, and give
It to the fairest. We stand upon the choice.”
The pastor lad stood gazing ; dazed, but bent
To do his best ; when the other — she that
comes,

And it is summer there — speechless, drew
nigh.

He looked on her, nor knew he any more
Until he saw the apple in her hand.

Æthra (to herself)

Who had done otherwise, let him step forth.

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Helen

It is a pretty tale; but, Prince, your thought?

Paris

Poor silly, silly lad!

Helen

I think his elders had not hit it better.

Paris

He stopt not with the deed, but would
stout hold,

When ripe his years were grown, that he
had looked

Upon the fairest shape of Earth or Heaven.
So late he learns the cheat.

Menelaus

Though Zeus himself were for it, not an
hour

I'd let him loose among the listening
girls. —

Dread Prince, see that you bide within my
walls.

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Æthra (to herself)

Would I were sure of fortune as of that !

Group of Courtiers in another part of the room

First Spartan

Come, now, have Ilion's meadows all the
bees,
And has your prince drained every hive ?

First Trojan

That's Paris.

Second Trojan

But sweets are his that from his cradle mates
With Cebren nymphs, and, counting up the
days
And nights, so tells the number of his loves.

First Spartan

Yearning as Helen's look was not her own
That out of Heaven leaned, and straight
was lost
To it in shadows of the Latmian bower.

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Another Spartan

Nor he that drew her down knew sweeter
dream
Than folds, now, languid Paris.

Second Trojan

Paris to-night
Is not the Paris of to-morrow. Then,
The hunt up, you will see another man.
Enough. The queen retires, led lingering
off
In loveliness which, after all, goes not,
But, like to summer day, disputes the dark.

A Spartan

Now to our cups and pleasures meet for men,
Then sleep, if time be left ; and when first
snort
The horses of the morning, for the hills !

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Paris alone on his couch, after the banquet. *Æthra*
approaches him

Æthra

No nymph, love-led from lorn Scamander's
bank,
Seeks, now, the couch of Paris. Nymph
nor maid
I am ; only a woman, *Æthra* old.

Paris

The hour invites both youth and age to
sleep.

Æthra

Youth sleep — sleep now ! Youth, youth
was mine, too, once.

Under a cliff, once, was I secret bathing,
When from his palace, choking all the deep
Off rocky Imbros, drave Poseidon forth
His horses golden-hoofed and brazen-maned,
Dashing toward wonted pleasure - haunts
ashore.

His fierce glance pierced to me ; he reached,
and off

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

His chariot whirled us. Ay, Poseidon 't was.
Marry, what had he for his amorous pains?
Something, I wot. Yet did he pluck a weed;
The water-god did pluck a weed, I say,
Held up beside the flower in reach of Paris.

Paris

Woman, I am the guest of Menelaus.

Æthra

Has love become so poor!
When I was young love lorded all the world.
There was no king but love, no queen but
 beauty,
In days when virgins closed with kings and
 gods,
And babes came of it worth the weight and
 pain.

Paris

Woman, I am his guest.

(Aphrodite appears and vanishes)

It was the look, the very look she had,
Smiling, on piny Ida.

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Æthra

How came he by her? The prize that felled
all Greece

At Sparta's feet, how was it won, at last?

How came the wooers up who, side by side

With Menelaus, chafed the very walls

That shut us in, to-night, shouldering to-
ward Helen?

You picture gentle gardeners, none so rude
Would pluck, ere it should flower, love's
loveliest bud.

I tell you, I who faced them, man by man,
They were so many bulls,
Which locked their horns together, pawed
the ground

As they would plow away Eurotas' bank,
Bellow strong Sparta down, till one of all
Should lure the heavenly heifer from her
hills.

It thaws the winter in my veins to think on 't;
And your young blood, young summer
blood, instead

Of throbbing hot to valor's fiery top,
Does clot and scum in the dull ooze of sleep.

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Paris (mutters, his mind returning to the vision)
Hot as my thought plunges no bolt of Jove,
Driven, hissing, down the hollow of the
night.

Æthra

They were not bulls? Well, make them
hunter-kings.
And what did they, the gallant hunter-
kings?
They ran her, like a wild thing, to the hole.
He won her, has her yet — and has her not.

Paris (rousing)

Her heart shall answer that : she loves the
king.

Æthra

With but a glance young Paris can see more
Than *Æthra* with her years, and all her
days
And nights of mother's ward.

Paris

She loves the king.

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Æthra

Ay, since who has her heart, the same is king.

Paris

She loves her lord.

Æthra

Ay, since who has her love
Is so her lord. — Didst ever know a nurse
So hurried she came off without her story?
You and your train had just come in the hall,
And Menelaus gone to greet you, when,
As wont, I went to bind the darling's hair.
Upon her couch I found her. And asleep?
Asleep she was, that soon; yet would she
smile,

Ay, speak, at times. Certes it was a sleep;
For when she woke she yet half-stayed in it,
With murmurs as of bird-tones far away,
Afloat upon the gloaming. So I found
Her when you had come in. Well, while I
robed

The child, to-night, she plied me, —
“Æthra, how

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

May mortals tell when truly 't is a god ;
Whether it be a dream, or they in truth
Look on a very god ? ” I answered her,
It was a thing to learn of one's own self,
Not to be taught. “ I think, I think,” she
said —

Remember she was not yet well awake —
“ I think the prince is — *followed by a goddess !* ”

Paris

Go ! Rather dreams that rack the souls in
Hell.

Send them ; but speak no further.

Æthra (to herself)

'T is enough.

[*Exit Æthra*

Paris

O terrible goddess ! Thou hast kept thy
word.

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Helen at her loom, weaving and singing

Helen

Softly, shepherd, watch your flock,
They must let the baby rock, —
By-a-by, by-a-by ;
Keep the dreams back, every one,
Till the journey is begun.
By-a-baby, by-a-by.

Not till baby floats away,
Pretty shepherd, let them stray, —
By-a-baby, by-a-by ;
Then around him let them play ;
Hark you, shepherd, what I say.
By-a-baby, by-a-by.

Careless shepherd, keep them back,
One is coming, white and black, —
By-a-baby, by-a-by ;
Never, never let him go
Who has spot upon his snow ;
By-a-baby, by-a-by.

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Softly, shepherd, soft, I say,
Not till baby floats away, —
By-a-baby, by-a-by.

Ah, the dreamkins, well they know !
Loose them, shepherd, let them go.
All alone are you and I.

(Enter *Menelaus*, returned from the hunt)

My lord safe home again!

(She throws a cloth over the loom)

Menelaus

Home, Dearest, home.

(He steps toward the loom)

Helen (holding him back)

Not yet ; the charm 's at work.

Menelaus

Ay. Tell me, then,

What song you sang.

Helen

A magic air it was,
A sleep-song Æthra taught me long ago,

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

A lullaby the mother sings at Athens ;
I sing it, and I am a child again.
But 't is an ugly gash upon your arm !
I hope you pricked the monster with such
 pain
He set the hills a-howl.

Menelaus

The tusk that dealt me this was grown in
 Thrace, —
Paris' taper hand.

Helen

The prince ! I 'd risk my naked arm 'gainst
 his.

Menelaus

Nay, boast it not ! the courage is too com-
 mon.

Helen

Dreamy, unbearded Paris !

Menelaus

Ay, Troy's Apollo, with the woman's wrist
And ringlets. Never more misleading man

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Did ramp Taygetus' lairs. To see him lilt
Along the hills, swinging this way and that
As though a zephyr stirred him, then the
stand !

The boar stood but a wink at bay. He
charged.

Mine, surely mine ! What happened? In
the nick

A spear came crying from behind, grazed
here,

Along its victor way, and Troy's the glory.
Beware of beardless princes !

Helen

Let him weigh anchor ; Sparta is not safe.

Menelaus

To-morrow I set out, but Paris stays.

Helen

I hoped you would deny Idomeneus,
And let the restless Cretans chase alone.
One day the king will hunt one day too
many.

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

(Enter *Æthra*)

Menelaus

'Tis one of *Æthra's* croakings. See, she
comes.

One has his friends, and has one friend of
all ;

I never can refuse Idomeneus.

Host with full hand and free our Thracian
friends.

Æthra (to herself)

An she fail there, Olympus is untopt
And all the lofty gods are jostled down.

Helen at the loom, *Æthra* by her side

Æthra

Manless once more. Hey day ! it 's hunt
again,

And Sparta wantons in her widow's weeds.

What said his Hunter Highness to the
weaving ?

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Helen

'T is but begun ; I could not show it so.

Æthra

The posture is a god's ; and that above
His head may grow into a goddess' wing.
A jump, and lo, your skill is at the pitch ;
A wondrous sudden mount. But one
 power, lass,
Can push so fast.

Helen

It may not be the prince.

Æthra

A hunter-king with plummy helmet on !

Helen

A little kindness for the kindly king.
'T is true he holds you here ; but why you
 know.
The gain is mine, not his.

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Æthra

I will repay him ; crown shall answer crown.
Remember I too had, one time, a kingdom.
But Æthra — let her pass. It's Helen now ;
The gods (and I) are busy now with Helen.
How came she here ? Is she the king's or
love's ?

Let these walls speak, what would the answer be ?

*In at that window swept the panting swan
To Leda's lap. Zeus had his hour of love,
That love might be again ; and Helen was.*
Is she the king's or love's ? Love's ; and he
comes !

(Enter *Paris*)

Paris

Fluttering 'twixt basket, harpstrings and the
web,
Fancy, and dare she build in rigorous Sparta ?

Helen (hurriedly covering the loom)
Perchance ; but he whose arm had might
against

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

My lord's would fright the younglings from
the nest.

Æthra (to herself)

That will he, and thence lure the mother-bird.

[Exit *Æthra*

Paris

Who is the woman with Queen Helen so
much,
This moment gone?

Helen

Born to a prophet-king,
Æthra, a slave at Sparta, was a queen
At home. The chance of battle lodged her
here,
And here she bides. Myself would set her
free ;
But since the king's will runs the other
way,
She stays to serve me.

Paris

Can you wholly trust her?

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Helen

If one may trust the love that serves too well.

Paris

Now first I learn that love may love too
well.

Queen Helen, fate's hour has struck, and I
must speak.

As gods and all men know, none sees your
face

And loves you not. I, Paris, made for love,
The last of men could look into this heaven,
Look once, and be thereafter what I was.

(Aphrodite appears and vanishes)

Helen (to Aphrodite)

Nay, goddess ; I have yielded oft, not know-
ing.

Nay ; I am stronger now.

Paris

'T is not the time
Or place for more, but one thing must I
know :

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Part we to meet again, or meet no more?
To-night my canvas fills for Salamis.

Helen (to herself)

I hear low music, sweeter than the brook,
Sweeter than evening in the summer leaves.
To Salamis — What was it that he said?

(to *Paris*)

The king's words were, "I go, but Paris
stays."

Paris

My men are in the boats.

Helen

The nights are many, many ; why to-night?

Paris

My men are in the boats ; and I must know
If now they drag me hence, drooped as the
pine

That, blasted, hangs upon the windy cliff,
Nor lifts his pithless arms ; or if I go
In my love's might, soon to return, and
speak, —

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Name, here, the terms of love,
And make it good at point of Trojan swords.

(Enter *Æthra*)

Helen

You said to-night, and something after that.

Æthra (to herself)

Out on the goddess! she has flown again
Before my darling, blinding her sweet eyes.

(She hurries past the loom, pulling off the
curtain)

Poor little Queen!

Helen

I am over it, good *Æthra*.

(Exit *Æthra*, while *Helen* rouses to find *Paris*
gazing at the figure in the loom)

I meant, believe me, none should ever know.

Paris

Down, down, my heart! be ironed, dun-
geoned deep,

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Lest you should, breaking through my
 breast, leap forth
To hers, and, summing that wild liberty,
Dash to it, and both, in love's unbroken
 shock,
Be struck to nothing. If love's word you
 speak,
Let her not hear your thunder in my veins ;
But softly speak as if the shadow spoke
She here has wrought, the lover in the loom.

Helen

I pray you, woo me not, but teach me, Paris !
Tell, tell me what I do, and why I do it !
A child am I ; as much a child as on
The day they seized me, braided up my
 hair,
My long bright hair, the plaything of the
 winds
Which loved to chase me on the sunny
 hills, —
Bound me, and, there among the valley
 flowers,
On thickest bed of all the sweet wild lives,

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Would spill my blood into their piteous
faces,

And so lift off the plague upon our land ;
As much a child as when mad Theseus
haled

Me from the Temple, castanet in hand,
A-dancing with the children — dragged me
thence

To weep, a captive, in his Attica.

Æthra can tell you all.

A child am I ; alas ! have ever been
A child, a cast leaf on the uncaring wind.

Paris

Queen Helen — soon must I speak the
dearer name —

Against the sovereign will clutched on us,
now,

We both are children. Nothing may I
teach.

Helen

Teach me, my Master, Lover-Lord, my
King.

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Paris

I may not teach ; but what love told may
tell

Again : not in my own sole might I come.

Helen

The Queen of Love came with you when
you came.

Her now I feel, her breath upon my face.

Paris

Ay, she that promised me. —

Whisper me, Mother ; give me fitting
words ! —

The tale I strove to tell you when we met —
My words killed by your beauty, slaying
speech

And soul at once — wanted the happy end,
The wondrous promise of the Queen of
Love.

You know it, now. Oh, sweeter than her
breath,

Flower-burdened, were her words ! “ Dearer
to me

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

She is than dearest child to mortal mother.
She waits ; her loveliness, her love is yours."

Helen (to Aphrodite)

Forgive one all unworthy of thy care ;
Goddess, forgive ! Thou knowest what has
been.

Paris

Turn to the past, my Love, my peerless
Love ;
Bring back the time gone by, the while I set
Against that dark this dawn and the day to
be.

Helen

The past is far away, now ; and so near
But yesterday ! Time and the world, all
changed.
And I ? The driven leaf is a moment lodged ;
Not still, but touched with rest, trembling
toward quiet.

Paris

You, Oreades, who hush the troubled hills,
And lay the unbroken charm on Dian's
groves ;

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

You, Nereides, who gleam in the green
 sea,
And watch and count the stars from Thetis'
 towers ;
You whose pure hands unlatch the skyey
 windows,
And loose the sun and rain, and wake the
 world
From her white sleep, calling the blossoms
 up, —
Come hither, sweetest Hours and sweetest
 Airs,
And serve her, sweeter, fairer than you all.

Helen

Say on, my Lover-Lord, nor let me wake.
Upon a blissful stop, a venomed voice
Crawled in ; but gashed itself with its own
 fangs,
And writhing, slowly died.

Paris

Wake not ; sleep on. This kiss, though you
 slept sound

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

As any sleep in graves, this must you feel;
Must feel, and know it mine —

Helen

Æthra ! Paris ! Oh ! Oh ! Where have I been,
And am come back to this !

Paris

Swift horror blanches yet this whitest brow !

Helen

A file of ghosts — 'T is passing, gliding by !
Dim shapes of men yet dwelling in bright
Hellas —

I know them ; once before they came, no
phantoms,
Oath-bound, each one, to take me home,
his bride.

Paris

There 's danger ? At a sign from me my men
Will quit the boats, dash hither from the
strand,
And straightway will we tame the haughty
ghosts.

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Helen

Spotty their corslets, their helmets all ablaze !

Paris

Dye yet their reddest blood with red of Hell,
And I will wade it.

Helen

Late I wore that thing,
The girdle in his great unkingdomed hand.

Paris (clasping *Helen*)

Heaven's hand or Hell's, this will I snatch
from it ;
So trophied, point the proud ship-beaks to-
ward Ilion.

(Enter *Æthra*)

Æthra

Hush, silly children ! You have slept and
waked,
A way all children have ; it is but nature.
I am a mother, children, Theseus' mother ;

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Two golden heads make not this old white
head.

Hush, pretty babes ! my hand will lead you
home.

Helen (A sudden light envelops her head)

My peace returns. No more I fear the
ghosts ;

But you, fierce, terrible Paris, make me
tremble.

Hear me ; let not the dear peace go again.
Hear, Paris, hear ; love has no further toil.
If I be not most honorably won,
Then love's a liar, and there is no truth ;
But if true love speak truth, know I am
won

Most fairly. And if my wish have any
weight,

And you would sometime take me, take me
now.

Æthra

Mad boy, begone ! Stay not to face the
king.

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Paris

This head, this golden head a mark for scorn !
Gods, gods, the while I speak how bright it
grows !

Helen

If scorn do point at me, 't will point because
Of what has been before this honest hour.
Go I or stay, I am not his, but yours ;
The grim ghosts know I never was the
king's.
The shame, the scorn, is hers who falsely
stays,
Not hers who goes, bold to be false no
longer.

Æthra

No other logic, Paris, straight as love's.
My own boy Theseus fell upon her, once,
And plucked her from the Temple. That
was robbery ;
The high gods bred and held her for another.
Love's day is come ; and if you take her
not,

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

This night, from damnèd Sparta, I say now,
To your pale face, I will myself set out
With her, alone, and go and stand with her
Before old Priam ; nor tell him half the story
Ere he shall shake you off, ay, brand his
darling

The very basest of his Thracian slaves.

Night. *Paris* and *Helen* are engaged in a finger-
game, which *Helen* invented to play with
Paris. *Æthra* watches them, herself unob-
served.

Helen

Could I but learn how dull you are at learn-
ing,
I should not try to teach you. You have
lost
A twenty kisses in as many minutes.

Paris

Is this the finger?

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Helen

That's the very one
You lost on last.

Paris

Then will I play it — so.

Helen

You kissed before you played.

Paris

Well, now I have played.

Helen

And kissed, too, out of turn.

Paris

This takes it back.

Helen

You cannot take it back.

Paris

No? Then here 't is.



WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

Helen

I say again, it is a finger-game,
Not played with lips — Was that the sentry's
signal?

Paris

I will look, for one more kiss.

Helen

I will look myself.

[*Helen* leaves the room, *Paris* following]

Paris

'T is a kind service; I will kiss you for it.

Æthra (following at a distance)

Where now 's the king, and where is Salamis,
Where aught my pretty ones so hung on
once?

All clean forgot; the goddess has her way.
But it is worth my woes, worth all my
bonds,

To look on that! Antic as nimblest fawns,

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

They frisk it to the chariot. — Sweetest joys
Of Aphrodite, she will tend you well.

Soon as you mount, the waiting mist will
fold,

And shut her darlings from the peeping
Spartans. —

Feast, Æthra, your old eyes; 'tis a brave
charm!

No dog may howl, no night thing stir
abroad;

The stallions, wont to neigh and prance as
though

They rolled their wild eyes on Aurora's
mares,

Now barely move their shining sides for
breath,

And every hoof sucks to the stubborn.
ground.

The king's fool-slaves have I drugged well
with wine;

They will not wake till we be far at sea.

Boy Paris bade me go, and have my free-
dom;

I will not take it till I see my bird

WHEN LOVE WAS LORD

In her white cage, all safe in strong-walled
Ilion.

Dark are the ways of men ; most brief are
joys,

And of brief joys is love, alas ! the briefest.
Love's hour is brief, but O that hour, that
hour !

My dears, who dream so deep, must wake
again ;

Tempest shall drive, the shock of vengeful
war

Shake down dream-built bliss. So let it
be.

When next a-hunting goes the hunter-king,
The din shall run the circuit of the seas.

Heaven wills it ; let it be. Farewell, fare-
well !

Farewell to Lacedæmon ! — Remember,
gods,

That I, old Æthra, stood with ye in this.

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